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The latest Formula 1 milestone in Verstappen's remarkable year

Retiring from two of the first three grands prix of the season and facing a strong early challenge from Ferrari is not how record-breaking campaigns normally begin. But the fact Max Verstappen has now set a new benchmark of 14 wins in one Formula 1 world championship season shows how brilliant the Dutchman and Red Bull have been.

Of course, the story behind that statistic also encompasses the missteps made by Ferrari and Mercedes in 2022. If last weekend's Mexican GP (page 12) is anything to go by, the Lewis Hamilton-Mercedes combo is the one most likely to challenge Red Bull in 2023, even if Ferrari insists its woeful showing was a one-off.

As Verstappen rightly points out, F1 seasons are longer now, but even taking that into account his strike rate is impressive. It's currently 70%, the same as Jim Clark in 1963. If he wins the final two races that would move the mark to 73%, second only to Alberto Ascari's 1952 championship campaign (75%) against much weaker opposition.

If Mexico was painful for Ferrari fans, at least events at Imola gave some reason to smile. The eagerly anticipated Ferrari Hypercar finally broke cover and made quite an impression. Gary Watkins was there and he brings you all the latest on the 499P project on p38.

That could be one of the cars of next year, but this week we're giving you the chance to pick out the best machines and drivers of 2022. Turn to p56 to have your say in our Autosport Awards.

Kevin Turner
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Hamilton interview
Seven-time champ on Merc's 2022 struggles and his plans to race on

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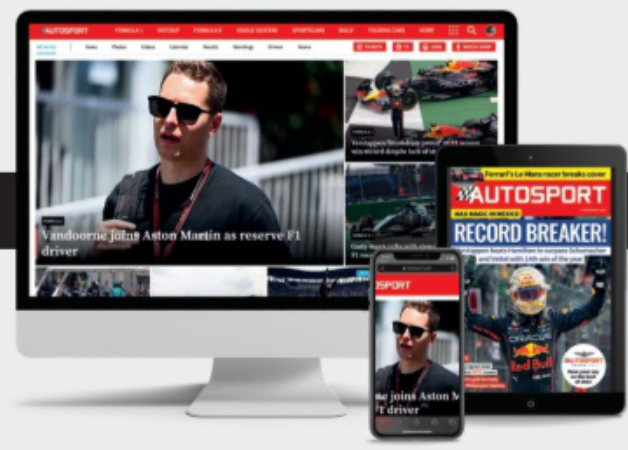

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Car performance was not regarded as direct element of 2021 breach

F1 teams split over severity of Red Bull cost-cap breach penalty

FORMULA 1

Red Bull Racing has been hit with a £6million fine and a lower aerodynamic testing limit after reaching a settlement with the FIA for breaching the 2021 budget cap.

The FIA announced after the Japanese Grand Prix that Red Bull was deemed to have exceeded the £118m budget cap last year following its audit of each team's submission under the financial regulations. Red Bull fiercely denied that it had exceeded the budget cap, but entered talks with the FIA over an Accepted Breach Agreement that would see it accept it had broken the cap and reach a settlement.

An agreement was finally reached last Wednesday, ahead of the Mexican Grand Prix, prompting the FIA to hand Red Bull a £6m fine and cut its aerodynamic testing by 10% for the next 12 months in a bid to hinder its car development. Aston Martin was also fined £391,000 for a procedural breach of the financial rules after inaccurately excluding a number of costs, albeit while remaining under the budget cap for 2021.

Horner said Red Bull had "begrudgingly" accepted penalty

BINGHAM

In publishing the Accepted Breach Agreement, the FIA revealed there were 13 areas of Red Bull's submission that were wrongly excluded from the budget cap, such as staff catering, sick pay and tax benefits. These added up to an extra £5.6m, putting Red Bull £1.8m over the budget cap to represent a 1.6% breach. Had Red Bull accounted for a notional tax credit as part of its submission, this figure would have fallen to £432,652 (0.37%).

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner called the penalty "enormous" and "draconian", taking particular issue with the limit of the aerodynamic running Red Bull will be able to complete in the windtunnel. The extra 10% cut means Red Bull will get just 63% of the windtunnel time for the next 12 months of the team that finishes seventh in this year's constructors' championship, compared to 75% and 80% for Ferrari and Mercedes.

"That represents anywhere between a quarter and half a second's worth of lap time," claimed Horner. "That comes in from now, that has a direct effect on next year's car, and will be in place for a 12-month period. That 10% put into reality will have an impact on our ability to perform on-track next year."

Horner explained that Red Bull opted to accept the FIA's proposal for the good of F1, fearing the saga could have rumbled on for another 12 months. "We felt it was in everybody's interests to say we close the book," he said. "We accept the penalties begrudgingly, but we accept them."

Horner claimed Red Bull's rivals were "pushing hard" for "a draconian penalty" to impact its chances of defending its titles in 2023, adding: "I'm sure if you burned our windtunnel down, it wouldn't be enough."

But the rest of the paddock saw things differently. Ferrari said it was "not happy" with the penalty as sporting director Laurent Mekies argued its true impact was "very limited", and that Red Bull's overspend was "worth around a couple of tenths" already. "We at Ferrari do not understand how the 10% reduction of the ATR can correspond to the same amount of lap time that we mentioned earlier," said Mekies. "Furthermore, there is another problem in that. Since there is no cost cap reduction in the penalty, the basic effect is to push the competitor to spend the money elsewhere."

Mercedes also questioned Horner's claim the 10% cut could be worth half a second, pointing out that teams with that advantage do not enjoy a similar lap time gain.

But Horner's Mercedes counterpart Toto

S BLOXHAM

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Mekies does not believe the penalty goes far enough

Wolff was calm about the matter. He said the penalty was "too little" for Mercedes and probably "too much" for Red Bull, but felt the damage to a team's reputation meant it would deter future budget cap breaches. "That is why I believe no team is going to put a foot wrong over the line," said Wolff. "You don't want to have your partners and your team dragged into this space."

While Horner held a dedicated press conference in Mexico to discuss Red Bull's budget cap breach and clear up what happened, he did not feature on Sky Sports' F1 coverage last weekend as part of a team-wide boycott of the broadcaster.

This came in response to comments in Austin by pit reporter Ted Kravitz that Lewis Hamilton had been "robbed" of the 2021 title, which prompted an angry response from Max Verstappen, who called out "constant" disrespect. The team will resume its duties with Sky in Brazil.

LUKE SMITH & ADAM COOPER

P12 MEXICAN GP

Audi confirms Sauber as partner for F1 2026 entry

FORMULA 1

Audi has confirmed that Sauber will serve as its works partner for its entry to Formula 1 from 2026, buying a stake in the Swiss team.

Audi announced back in August at the Belgian Grand Prix that it would be joining the F1 grid from 2026 with a power unit under the new regulations, but fell short of confirming which team it would work with. The tie-up with Sauber was widely accepted as one of the worst-kept secrets in the F1 paddock, but the news finally went public last week as Audi named the team as its "strategic partner".

Sauber has confirmed that Audi will buy shares in the team and, while it did not explain any specifics, it is thought this could run as high as 75%.

Sauber's title sponsorship deal with Alfa Romeo will conclude at the end of 2023, after which it is expected to return to its original Sauber name and continue to use Ferrari engines before linking up with Audi for 2026.

In a rare public statement, main shareholder and chairman of the board of Sauber Holdings Finn Rausing indicated that he will remain involved. "Audi is the best strategic partner for the Sauber Group," he said. "It is clear that we share values and a vision, and we look forward to achieving our common goals in a strong and successful partnership."

Audi board member Oliver Hoffmann, the man responsible for the F1 programme, indicated that Audi's use of the Sauber windtunnel for its World Endurance Championship LMP1 programme and other projects had played a role in the decision to go with the Hinwil outfit. "We are delighted to have gained such an experienced and competent partner for our ambitious F1 project," said Hoffman. "We already know the Sauber Group with its state-of-the-art facility and experienced team from previous collaborations, and are convinced that together we will form a strong team."

Will Bottas be part of Audi's 2026 line-up?

SUTTON

Frederic Vasseur, team principal of Sauber, said the Audi deal would be a "game changer" for the Swiss outfit as it looked to grow into a leading F1 operation. "F1 is getting more and more difficult," said Vasseur. "To stay as an independent team today – it's quite impossible from my point of view. It was probably the best option we could add and we are more than happy to have this kind of deal for the future."

As seen with other members of the F1 grid, the chassis and engine projects for the Audi team will operate out of separate sites. The engine will be produced out of Audi's site in Neuburg, while Sauber will continue to run the team from Hinwil in Switzerland.

Although the partnership is still more than three years away from debuting, current Sauber driver Valtteri Bottas, 33, indicated in Mexico that he would be keen to stick around for Audi's works arrival, believing it will be a "huge opportunity" for the team.

LUKE SMITH & ADAM COOPER

Audi announced its plan to enter F1 in 2026 at August's Belgian GP

SUTTON

ABBOTT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Champ Jarvis out of Shank for 2023

IMSA SPORTSCAR

Oliver Jarvis will not defend his IMSA SportsCar Championship title next season. The Briton has confirmed that he will not remain with Meyer Shank Racing, which has maintained a wall of silence on the identity of Tom Blomqvist's team-mate in the squad's new Acura ARX-06 LMDh in 2023.

"I'm not staying," said Jarvis, who joined the team after four IMSA seasons with Mazda. "It was a one-year agreement and there has been a decision not to continue. For whatever reason it didn't work out."

A move to another team for a full campaign isn't on the cards for Jarvis, because his latest deal with the United Autosports LMP2 squad for the World Endurance Championship commits him to all the races and wouldn't allow him to take part in the two IMSA fixtures that clash with the WEC.

Jarvis is now looking towards a campaign in the IMSA enduros at Daytona, Sebring and Road Atlanta. "I have enjoyed my time in IMSA, so I'm keeping my eyes open; there are other opportunities," said the 38-year-old. "It would have been nice to continue with Shank into the LMDh era. I came into the team with the goal of winning big races and challenging for the title, and we won the Daytona 24 Hours and the title."

No comment was available from Shank apart from the line in a statement last week announcing its drivers for the enduros that co-champion Blomqvist's full-season team-mate will be announced at a later date.

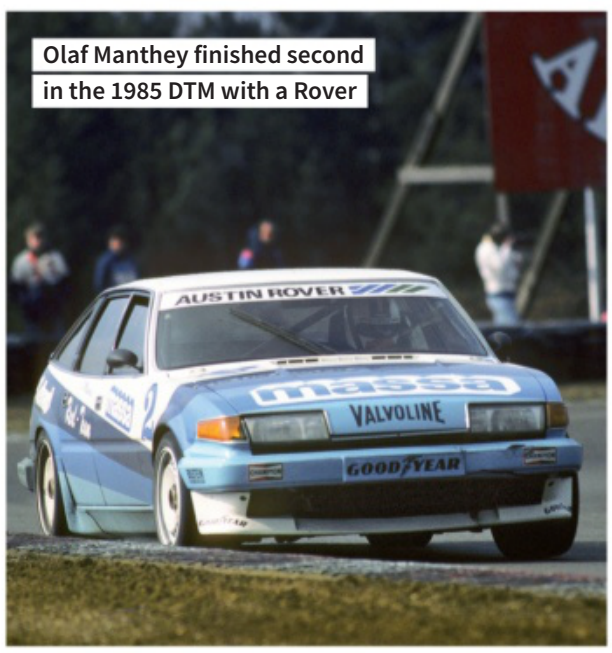
The backstory to Jarvis's departure from Shank appears to be linked to the team's failure to take up its option on his services for 2023 at the allotted time. Jarvis then opted to sign a new contract with United, crucially one that gave it first call on his services. There he will be joined by Blomqvist, who has come in to drive the #23 ORECA-Gibson 07 in place of Alex Lynn.

Shank is known to have tested a number of drivers recently. Neel Jani, Patrick Pilet and Felipe Fraga were among them.

Blomqvist was confirmed for 2023 by Shank in August, while last week it was announced that he will be joined for the enduros by the team's two IndyCar drivers. Helio Castroneves will race ARX-06 at Daytona, Sebring and Road Atlanta, while Simon Pagenaud will come in for Daytona.

GARY WATKINS

Manthey eyes DTM with Porsche for 2023



Olaf Manthey finished second in the 1985 DTM with a Rover

McKLEIN

DTM

Manthey Racing and Toksport WRT could enter the 2023 DTM with Porsche.

The German marque was represented in the DTM for the first time this season, with SSR Performance and Team Bernhard entering three cars between them and scoring three wins.

More teams are now expressing interest in running the 911 GT3-R in the DTM, including Manthey, which currently handles Porsche's factory effort in the World Endurance Championship. With the GTE Pro class coming to an end after this month's Bahrain finale, Manthey Racing has the capacity to mount an assault on the DTM.

"No decision has been made yet," said team boss Olaf Manthey. "It will take a few more weeks before we can say something more specific. You always have to look at where the coverage is, what the audience figures look like and so on. It all has to make sense."

Toksport WRT, which made a wildcard appearance at the Nurburgring round in 2021 and made an unsuccessful attempt to race in the series this year, is hoping to join in 2023. Earlier this year, it severed its ties with Mercedes and joined the Porsche fold, fielding the marque's GT3 contender in 24-hour races at both Spa and the Nurburgring.

SVEN HAIDINGER

P38 FERRARI'S NEW LE MANS ERA

LE MANS/WEC Ferrari launched its new Le Mans Hypercar at Imola last weekend ahead of the marque's return to top-flight sportscar racing in next year's World Endurance Championship. The hybrid prototype, unveiled in a livery mimicking that in which its lead 312 PB raced in 1972-73, will be known as the 499P in reference to the capacity of one of the cylinders of its V6 twin-turbo engine. The wraps came off the car on Saturday evening at the Finali Mondiali Ferrari 'world finals' and then Alessandro Pier Guidi took to the track on Sunday. **Photo by Ferrari**

Beganovic to F3 with Prema

FIA FORMULA 3

Formula Regional European champion Dino Beganovic will make his FIA Formula 3 debut with Prema in 2023.

The Ferrari Academy driver, who secured his title with Prema, will join fellow Formula Regional driver Paul Aron at the reigning teams' champion next season.

Beganovic made his single-seater debut in 2020 in Italian F4 with Prema, finishing third in the standings before graduating to Formula Regional European with the team. He sealed the 2022 title 40 points clear of ART driver Gabriele Mini, scoring four wins and eight other podiums.

"I am extremely happy to be racing with Prema," said the 18-year-old. "Prema has an amazing history in Formula 3 and won at least one championship per year there."

Team principal Rene Rosin said: "We have been working with Dino since the very beginning of his single-seater career, and we are elated to continue for 2023. We went through Formula 4 and Formula Regional with increasingly impressive results together, and his run in 2022 shows how competent and outstanding he has become as a driver."

Mercedes junior Andrea Kimi Antonelli, who took both the Italian and German F4 titles this year with Prema, is also staying with the team for his step into the Formula Regional European Championship in 2023.

MEGAN WHITE

IN THE HEADLINES

HAMILTON'S FILM COMPANY

Lewis Hamilton has launched a new TV and film production company, Dawn Apollo Films. The company is working on Brad Pitt's F1-related film, as well as a documentary on Hamilton's life. Hamilton said the goal was to "make impactful stories and ultimately to inspire people".

MEXICO GETS FRESH F1 DEAL

Mexico will remain on the Formula 1 calendar until at least 2025 after signing a new three-year contract. The race has been a hit since returning in 2015, but its future beyond the new deal may depend in the next round of elections in 2024.

NEW TILKE TRACK FOR 2023

A new Tilke-designed race track in Tennessee will open next year, with the aim of attracting international-level events to its 2.67-mile 'Grand Prix' road course. The Flatrock Motorsports Park and Motorclub will offer three layouts, including a 3.5-mile Circuit Club track, an Endurance layout of almost six miles and a CIK kart track.

MARTIN BACK TO BMW...

Maxime Martin will return to BMW following his departure from Aston Martin after five seasons. The Belgian is rejoining a manufacturer for which he was on the books from 2013-17, a stint that included victory in the 2016 Spa 24 Hours and three DTM wins. Martin's programme, which is likely to be focused on the BMW M4 GT3, has yet to be confirmed.

...AS AUDI STARS ARRIVE

Dries Vanthoor and Charles Weerts also appear to be off to BMW after their departure from Audi was confirmed at the weekend. The winners of the past three GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup titles with WRT look certain to segue across to BMW with the squad. Weerts's father, Yves, is also one of the major shareholders of the team.

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The evolution of Max Verstappen

The assurance that comes with two world titles will surely change Red Bull's star as he grows into a role of increasing power and influence

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Back in the spring, with the new ground-effects cars finally revealed, Autosport wondered: what kind of champion would Max Verstappen be?

Well, it's clear Verstappen absolutely hasn't lost drive and determination. That was obvious from his early 2022 fights with Charles Leclerc and could be heard in his public frustration with Red Bull's early issues. The evidence suggests that Verstappen *has* raced Leclerc differently in 2022 compared to Lewis Hamilton last year. But clearly he hasn't faced as stern a test this time compared to the battle of 2021.

But Verstappen has showed flashes of his previous ruthlessness, specifically at Silverstone. Then there was the brief re-emergence of the haste that occasionally took over Verstappen early in his F1 career in his botched pass on Lando Norris in Singapore. But these were rare and minor moments in a brilliant, dominant display.

This year's results have truly blown away the image of Sergio Perez as Red Bull's tyre management star. Hamilton's skills on this are well known and, judging by what was witnessed in Mexico last weekend, Verstappen is on that level of mastery too. Red Bull team boss Christian Horner reckons his charge has in fact improved in this critical area compared to 2021. "He's always been strong at it," says Horner. "But this year, he's been exceptional."

After the Mexico FP2 2023 tyre test, Autosport has learned that the planned switch to heating tyre blankets to just 50C — down from the current 70C — is unlikely to go ahead next year if F1's stakeholders accept Pirelli's new proposals on this element. As it stands, F1's total tyre blanket ban is still coming for 2024, therefore playing to Verstappen's tyre whispering skills. But here's a good place to note his growing influence on F1 — and his role in the tyre blanket temperatures plans for 2023 being re-evaluated.

Verstappen was among its most vocal critics, saying in Mexico such a move would lead to "a lot of crashes". It demonstrates his champion's power — now he heads the pack, his words count.

The spat between the Verstappen/Red Bull camp and Sky Sports F1 last weekend also shows how far they can reach. In choosing not to speak with the broadcaster, Verstappen is acting well within his rights. But boycotting media isn't good, especially in his 'post-truth' age. The powerful being available and willing to undergo all scrutiny is essential, and it's always better to rise above perceived provocation. This is what Hamilton did so well last weekend in his understated response to Fernando Alonso's views on the worth of the Briton's titles compared to Verstappen's in an interview with Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf*, which ignited a social media storm.

Where Hamilton is the joint record holder of total titles, now Verstappen has the single-season wins record (14) and most points (and counting) in one season. But his reaction to this was interesting. He'd played down equalling Michael Schumacher and Sebastian Vettel in Austin the week before — referencing the fact F1 has more races per year now than in any previous era — and was hardly effusive in Mexico when the wins record became his alone.

This was reminiscent of an oft-used tactic many drivers deploy to avoid losing focus over the course of a campaign following a single event. That 'onto-the-next-one' mantra. Perhaps Verstappen is deploying that approach again here — maybe targeting a perfect end to the campaign to avoid giving Leclerc or Hamilton useful momentum for 2023, something so important to Nico Rosberg defeating the latter a year after taking the last three victories of 2015.

But when Autosport asked if he was trying to avoid losing focus by under-celebrating breaking the wins record, he denied it. At play too could be athletes' desire to avoid giving an opponent any edge by revealing too much of their true feelings.

> **"There were just no airs or graces on display, only a relaxed and contented figure"**

"I was never really interested in stats," Verstappen said in the post-race press conference in Mexico, where it must be said he was definitely pleased at securing his latest accolades. "I just live in the moment."

Fair enough, really. We keen observers hope for unbridled joy at major achievements — it's the emotion/action combination that makes sport so captivating. We humans live for narrative. But that's not Verstappen's way, at least in public.

That's not to say he's some emotionless, robot champion, however. His post-Austin qualifying shock and sadness at the news of Dietrich Mateschitz's death were clear to see. Then there was his charmingly genial reaction to fans coming up and commending his USA victory while he sat at the bar of a downtown Austin BBQ restaurant a few days later. There were just no airs or graces on display, only a relaxed and contented figure.

So, as Verstappen's champion narrative continues to evolve, the question now is how will he carry on developing as a person and driver? His 2022 supremacy and comfort are clear. But perhaps we'll see something else again in a closer fight the neutrals will crave ever more after that lifeless Mexico race. Not that that was Verstappen's fault. He just did as he does right now: win.

P12 MEXICAN GP REPORT

Seeing really is believing

Ferrari's return to the top of sportscar racing has been a long time coming. So seeing the 499P in the metal is a milestone moment for enthusiasts

GARY WATKINS

Sometimes I feel I've spent my whole professional career waiting. It seems to be an occupational hazard for the sportscar journalist. I waited nearly 20 years for the return of world championship sportscar racing and 15 for Porsche to try to add to its tally of overall Le Mans 24 Hours wins. But the wait for Ferrari to come back to the top of the sportscar tree was so long that I don't even count it.

I reported on what I call the original world championship, which in its final iteration was known as the Sportscar World Championship, in the early 1990s and was there at Le Mans in the 1990s when Porsche notched up its 14th, 15th and 16th victories in the Big One. So the arrival of the new World Endurance Championship in 2012 and Porsche's return with the 919 Hybrid in 2014 were magic moments for me. I was there — waiting — for all the years we didn't have a world series or a Porsche in the top class at Le Mans.

But Ferrari's absence had been so long that it was outside my frame of reference. I was only seven when Arturo Merzario and Carlos Pace finished a distant second at the French enduro in 1973 with the 312 PB, so motor racing was at least a couple of years away from entering my consciousness. More to the point, I wasn't even born when the Prancing Horse claimed the most recent of its nine overall victories at the French enduro in 1965. So by the time I pitched up as a fresh-faced young journo in the sportscar paddock in 1990, Ferrari's exploits at the front of the Le Mans grid were pretty much a distant memory. Or in my case, not a memory at all.

> **"I've walked around the car, though I resisted the temptation to lay my grubby hands upon it"**

For virtually all my 30-plus years in the sportscar paddock it appeared that it would remain that way, even though Ferrari did tippy-toe around the fringes of premier league sportscar racing in that time.

There was the Ferrari F40LM at the back end of the 1980s that was given a new lease of life by the GT racing revival that followed in the 1990s. There was even an upgraded version of the car, the F40 GT Evoluzione, developed with private money.

We also had the glorious — in looks and sound — 333 SP prototype from 1995. It was designed as a customer car for IMSA's World Sports Car class that had come on stream the previous year, and there was initially opposition from the factory to those customers intent on taking the car to Le Mans. Anyone who heard the scream of that four-litre V12 in France will no doubt have rejoiced that it relented.

The Ferrari 333 SP kept coming back to the Circuit de la Sarthe — at least one was present every year from 1995 to 1999 — but it was never truly a contender. It was, after all, always in the hands of privateer entrants.

Then there was the F50 GT project that followed quickly after the arrival of the 333 SP. The car was conceived to go up against the McLaren F1 GTR — an outright Le Mans winner, of course — in the BPR Global Endurance GT Series.

The problem for this GT1 machine was the cars that started turning up as it was being developed. The Porsche 911 GT1 parts-bin special moved the goal posts in 1996 and then the Mercedes CLK-GTR picked them up and ran away with them when the BPR series effectively became the FIA GT Championship in 1997. Ferrari didn't have much choice but to give up on the project.

There was also a whiff of a Ferrari LMP1 factory programme just as the new-look WEC was getting going. Big Ferrari boss Luca di Montezemolo made some positive comments and then his sportscar subaltern Antonello Coletta admitted that there was some kind of evaluation going on. How far it got, I cannot tell you, but as we all know there was never a Ferrari LMP1 car.

It is against that backdrop in my time on the sportscar beat that I had to interpret Ferrari's involvement in a process to create a new class to replace LMP1, a process that got going early in 2018. Ferrari was most definitely an active participant, but I wasn't sure how serious it was about biting the bullet and going for ultimate Le Mans glory once again.

So that day in February last year when Ferrari announced its long-awaited return was a big one for me. But the idea that Ferrari would be back at the pinnacle of sportscar racing after a 50-year hiatus never really sunk in, even when we saw the first photos of the car testing at Fiorano back in the summer. But finally it's real for me. I've seen the car we now know as the 499P and walked around it, though I resisted the temptation to lay my grubby hands upon it.

Through the years of the rule-making machinations I had a 'believe it when I see it' opinion on a Ferrari return. Grainy spy shots of a car running in camouflage are one thing, seeing the car in the flesh is quite another. And I can tell you that I like what I see.

Roll on the Sebring 1000 Miles in March.

P38 FERRARI 499P LAUNCH

YOUR SAY

Given the few World Endurance rounds, why not get Liberty Media involved with the WEC to blend with the F1 schedule?

STEVE SINGLETON

Sight of Ferrari Hypercar stirs excitement

One look at the Ferrari 499 Hypercar on a Formula 1 weekend and I was immediately struck by the thought that this looks way more exciting and relatable than an F1 car. Imagine Leclerc versus such as Verstappen, Russell and Norris hammering through Eau Rouge in cars like this, with entries from Mercedes, Red Bull, BMW, Porsche and McLaren – just like Siffert, Rodriguez, Ickx and Andretti!

The FIA is missing a trick here; especially with a manufacturer-driven F1 that badly needs to be closer to road requirements.

Initially, given the few World Endurance Championship rounds, why not get Liberty Media involved with the WEC to blend with the F1 schedule, even subbing WEC events into the F1 track rotation, with the same drivers? Then we would see true all-round champions like Andretti stand up.

Crazy? Or is this the pathway to a more relevant premier World Championship future?

Steve Singleton
Yorkshire

Turn to page 38 for our Ferrari 499P analysis – ed

A 'minor infringement'...

In BTCC scrutineering, if the rideheight checking roller cannot pass between the front splitter and the Tarmac, the car is disqualified. If it passes along only 97%, rather than 100%, that is not classed a "minor infringement", it is still DSQ.

As forewarned by some, including Autosport's correspondents, the FIA has chosen to allow Red Bull Racing a budget for the 2021 season totalling $154million, comprising the $145m permitted, plus $2m overspend, plus the $7m fine: money which I'm sure Dr Marko and Mr Horner will think was well worth it.

Graeme Innes-Johnstone
Elland

Money is a drop in the ocean

A cost cap breach is a cost cap breach, major or minor, and it would appear a risk worth taking as it seems impossible to prove the extra money was spent on improving the cars – Red Bull apparently chose to buy more sandwiches!?

Christian Horner may view the penalties are "enormous" and "draconian" but, to the average F1 follower, the money is a drop in the ocean compared to the marketing income generated by 'World Champion' status, and we'll never know the impact of a 10% reduction in aerodynamic testing. Once again, we can only look on as money continues to erode the integrity and values of the sport we have loved.

Rob Howe
By email

What budget does the fine come from?

I wonder if the £6million fine that has just been dished out to the Red Bull F1 team now has to be included in their expenditure for 2022; and if so, will that put them in an overspend situation for 2022 too? Or do they have a massive contingency entry in their budget, for crash damage repairs and other non-foreseeable items, and provision for fines acquired over the season?

Andrew Beint
Chippenham, Wiltshire

Have your say, get in touch

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RACE CENTRE

Verstappen savours his 14th win of the 20 grands prix run so far this year, with two still to come

FORMULA 1

MAX SEES OFF LEWIS FOR RECORD VICTORY

It was Verstappen vs Hamilton for a second week running, but this time in Mexico City there was never much doubt about the end result

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Expectations of a thrilling contest were high heading into Formula 1's 2022 Mexico City Grand Prix. Dominant title winner Max Verstappen may have secured a sixth pole of his campaign of campaigns, but there was a serious threat from two rival cars in between him and team-mate Sergio Perez on the grid. Plus, this race had not been won from pole in six years, the long run to Turn 1 making things harder for the polesitter punching the first hole through the air having much to do with that stretch.

The boisterous crowd and a colourful grid set-up charged the atmosphere, with Perez's every move applauded and chanted. But it was the possibility of Mercedes taking a first 2022 victory that made this race so different to the 19 that had come before, with Ferrari a rare non-factor.

It wasn't to be, the contest ultimately lifeless, with Verstappen securing a 14th victory of his second title-winning season ahead of Lewis Hamilton. In doing so he set a new record for most victories in one F1 championship.

But it was still Mercedes' strongest showing of 2022 given its strategy briefly looked like having the upper hand and it had the pace to threaten Verstappen's pole-clinching run in qualifying too. There were several reasons why — the first of which being the much-discussed altitude factor at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, which negated the W13's ongoing drag issues with its thin air at 7350ft above sea level.

So, the race rather fizzled out on-track, before the chaotic celebration scenes enlivened things again. And here are nine reasons why the promise wasn't delivered, leaving podium party memories instead of a classic race.

1 LACK OF OVERNIGHT RAIN CEMENTS ONE-STOP STRATEGY

The general expectation heading into the race was that it would be a two-stop affair, if the drivers eschewed tyre management and pushed on — taking life out of rubber that generally doesn't suffer thermal degradation here, surface stress the worry instead. At the same time, a one-stopper was feasible if the compounds were brought in gently and treated well over a stint, with sliding minimised.

But that was put at serious risk by the possibility of rain soaking the 2.67 miles of parkland circuit in east Mexico City. It had been deluged by precipitation on Thursday night as paddock personnel enjoyed a welcome party laid on by the race promoter — many, including Autosport, in fancy dress to celebrate this race's 60th anniversary. But after that, threatening clouds had not put down more than a few drops all weekend.

After Verstappen had taken pole on Saturday and as the city's

Emirates FLY BETTER
Emirates FLY BETTER
Emirates FLY BETTER
Emirates FLY BETTER
Verstappen is away as Hamilton claims second and Russell runs out wide. Perez will soon pass him
GRAYTHEN

inhabitants partied at the legendary and lavish Day of the Dead parade, thunderstorms broke out. But they were very localised, with the track only being hit by a small amount of rain and just on its western flank.

"The track evolution is quite high here in Mexico," said Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola, explaining why a two-stopper had not ultimately emerged as the preferred strategy. "If they are starting with a green track [reset by rain] that would affect the degradation of the tyre in a different way."

It wasn't to be, with the track on race day actually in even better condition as the heat was down 10C and 3C from the minimum and peak track temperatures respectively in qualifying, which meant less rear axle sliding. But a one-stopper starting on the softs and going to the mediums still represented a "risk" — per Red Bull team boss Christian Horner, whose squad nevertheless went for it with both cars "following Dietrich Mateschitz's mantra of 'no risk, no fun'".

2 FERRARI DID NOT MAKE THE BATTLE A THREE-WAY FIGHT

For the first time in 2022, Ferrari ended up posing no threat to Red Bull in either qualifying or the race. Although it lost at Budapest, Zandvoort and Austin too, with Mercedes beating it to second place in that trio of races, Ferrari had at least been one of a pole threat, the pole winner or a possible race winner. In Mexico, it was nowhere either on one-lap speed or race pace. There were several causes for this underwhelming display — a far cry from its FP1-topping form, when Carlos Sainz led Charles Leclerc.

"The ride was not great, the balance was not great," team boss Mattia Binotto said of the horrid handling the F1-75s displayed all weekend. That was in peak downforce for qualifying and the race, Ferrari having tried its low-drag arrangement for FP2, when Leclerc crashed heavily during the 2023 tyre test.

The red machines just didn't turn in as snappily as their rivals in blue and silver, and bucked and slid horribly if they ran hard over the kerbs through the second sector's fast, sweeping sequence. But it was all underpinned by a bigger problem.

With their turbo power turned down — in fear, it's said, of the fiery exit to Sainz's Austria race reoccurring at a much greater altitude — the Ferraris were slow off the corners and didn't trouble the speed trap's leading figures. "We are not as efficient or we didn't have the capacity at least to run maximum power here," Binotto explained.

The result was a lonely, anonymous race for the Scuderia as F1 was robbed of a three-way victory fight. Sainz led home Leclerc by 10.7s, a minute back from Verstappen's first place, having seen off his team-mate's Turns 4-6 attack on the opening lap once Valtteri Bottas's Alfa Romeo had been passed in a neat outside of Turn 1 Leclerc swoop. »

3 MERCEDES WENT THE WRONG WAY ON STRATEGY

"I had a gut feeling that they would be on the soft to start with," Hamilton would tell the post-race press conference of the moment when the first stint strategy tyres are finally revealed on the grid. "At that moment," Hamilton continued, "I thought that we may be in trouble. But then again, it's a long race, so I thought maybe they'll be on a two-stop."

Given the decision to start on the soft C4 rubber, Verstappen had to produce a very canny race, underpinned by smart tyre management. The mediums would provide better durability and the soft would be vulnerable to graining, especially as the stint-one tyre with a full 100kg fuel load aboard. The graining hadn't been seen in practice but is a regular feature of the Mexico races — exacerbated in 2022 because of the understeer characteristics the compounds currently have in lower-speed corners.

"Not warming them up too quickly, making sure there was longevity to them," Horner said of how Verstappen had to drive in the first stint. This was extended to lap 25 even as he complained of his left-front feeling "dead" due to the graining, the added laps required to make things easier on the mediums he would take to the finish.

Horner called Mercedes' decision to try a medium-hard one-stopper "conservative" and, with hindsight's benefit, the Silver Arrows squad agreed. "If we could run the race again, we'd have started on the soft tyre," said the team's director of trackside engineering, Andrew Shovlin. "We knew that a soft-medium one-stop was a possibility, but we did not expect it to be quite so comfortable…"

4 THE START COULDN'T HAVE GONE BETTER FOR RED BULL

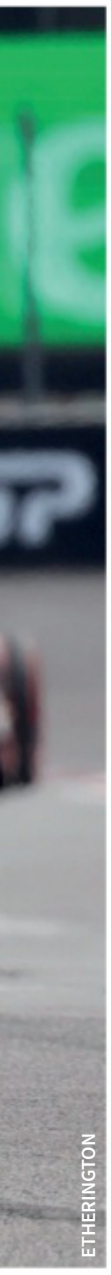
We'll get to the additional reasons why Verstappen's eventual winning strategy came off so smoothly, but it can't be overstated in saying that his driving in the race's opening seconds was "crucial" — as he put it — to the final result.

Having proved 12 months ago here that a stunning run and pass into the first corner can be the making of a Mexican GP victory from off the front row, Verstappen understood defence was required off the line. This, he said, was made worse by "a small mistake with the [clutch] release" that left him stuttering fractionally when the lights went out. But it was barely noticeable from the outside and "still good enough" to ensure he could swing across the bows of his fellow front-row starter George Russell and hug the inside line all the way to the first corner. There, with Russell having moved left and looking to the outside, Verstappen ran wide to the edge of the track and obliged the Mercedes to follow him tight on the Turn 2 inside kerbs.

Russell was doubly in a bind because Hamilton had been able to nip swiftly through the inside line at Turn 1 and so was alongside his momentum-shorn team-mate on turn-in for the second corner. Here, Russell made a decision that made Mercedes' race much harder. "I've had a bit of a scrappy last three races," he said of his thinking at this vital, fleeting point of the race. "That was probably a factor of taking it too cautiously."

Aware Hamilton was the one on his outside, Russell jumped hard across the kerbs. This allowed his team-mate a smooth run through Turn 3, where, although Russell's line meant he could get on the gas and come back alongside the other Mercedes, Hamilton's position on the racing line meant the younger Briton ran onto more kerbs. This again cost him momentum and Perez, having kept a watching brief behind the leaders through the opening corners after pulling out of Hamilton's slipstream rather early on the run to Turn 1, powered by down the second straight. He sealed his move into third when Russell braked early for Turn 4 and then set off after Hamilton.

The seven-time world champion was 1.4s behind Verstappen at the end of lap one of 71, which stopped him being in DRS range when the overtaking aid was activated one tour later. The Red Bull's straightline


ETHERINGTON

Ferraris were anonymous as Sainz led Leclerc to an inglorious 5-6

S BLOXHAM

Russell takes on the hard tyres for what had turned into a slog of a race

ETHERINGTON

speed prowess aided the leader's pace through the next 20 laps — Verstappen was metronomic in producing times in the low 1m23s, other than one-offs in the middle part of that bracket due to whacking the Turn 3 kerbs too hard on lap 4 and sliding wide, and a 1m22.9s visit on lap 15 — just after Red Bull had asked him to push to snap the tow that was helping keep Hamilton close.

"It definitely was surprising to see how consistent he was able to keep it," Hamilton said of his rival's stint-one pace. "In the early phase I'm sure he was managing a little bit [even a 1m23-flat was five seconds slower than Verstappen's pole-winning time], but I could tell that they had the upper hand in that first stint. But then towards the end I started to close up a little bit."

The gap between Hamilton and Verstappen had fluctuated across this phase, gradually creeping up to a maximum of 2.4s before coming down to 1.7s as the graining made life hard for the Dutchman just as he was working to "extend a few laps" using the previous buffer he'd built up. On laps 22 and 23 he was firmly back in the mid-1m23s, and then dropped to a 1m23.8s. "The last few laps were a bit tough with the soft tyres," he explained. "[But] it was all about just getting to that certain number of laps."

At his stop, Verstappen moved to the mediums and got turned around in 2.5s. This was twice as fast as Red Bull had managed with Perez two tours before — the Mexican driver also dealing with graining while running four seconds behind Hamilton. "[It] looks like the nut actually stuck, or wouldn't undo cleanly," Horner suggested about why Perez's soft left-rear had been so slow coming off.

That would come back to bite Red Bull later in the race, but Perez's presence behind Hamilton — and not Russell — was a problem even as the longevity benefit provided by the mediums played out with the two silver cars now leading the race.

"I kept telling them the tyre was fine," Hamilton said of his five-lap stint at the head of the pack. But, during this period, Perez was lighting up the timing screens with a series of personal bests even while passing the yet-to-stop Leclerc and being briefly held up by Sainz too. »

QUALIFYING

ETHERINGTON

Instead of the typical 2022 Red Bull versus Ferrari battle for pole position, in Mexico Mercedes enjoyed its strongest qualifying showing of the season. That's even including George Russell's shock Hungarian Grand Prix pole.

This was because the silver cars looked so strong in FP3 – dominating final practice while looking smooth and planted, while Max Verstappen struggled badly with oversteer aboard his RB18. Then, when kerb-slide struggles confined Carlos Sainz to fifth and 2022 pole king Charles Leclerc had DRS and engine issues that left him seventh behind the impressive-on-slippery-surfaces Valtteri Bottas, Mercedes' chance was clear.

Except, track temperatures rising 5C between the two Saturday sessions meant the drivers had to be extra careful to avoid stressing the tyres. This left Russell – the FP3 pacesetter – "driving terribly" with "no rhythm whatsoever" during the early segments. Here, Hamilton was supreme, leading the way in Q1 and Q2, while Verstappen struggled with the problems that had previously plagued him. But the world champion kept at it, "fine-tuning a few things on the [steering] wheel" and making front wing angle adjustments trying to rectify his balance issues. And it worked. Come the final segment, he "finally could push a little bit more", resulting in "two decent laps", both good enough for pole.

The first, a 1m17.947s, featured a compliant car over the kerbs in the first three corners, which Verstappen noted "you have to perfectly hit to actually gain time". It was less happy on his second Q3 run as Verstappen carried a touch more speed, but he "gained just a little bit everywhere" for a 1m17.775s.

"HE 'FINALLY COULD PUSH A LITTLE BIT MORE', RESULTING IN 'TWO DECENT LAPS', BOTH GOOD ENOUGH FOR POLE"

Russell, much happier with his driving, trailed by 0.132s after the opening runs, then on his final go he really attacked the opening corner kerbs, but was undone by "a big oversteer moment" between Turns 4 and 5. He then "locked up just trying too hard in sector three to make up" and slid off track at Turn 12 entering the stadium. He ended up with a 0.304s margin to Verstappen.

Similar for Hamilton on his first Q3 run, where he paid the price for going too far over the kerbs at Turns 2 and 3. From late in Q2, he'd also been experiencing an engine oscillation issue that cost him power through poor corner-exit acceleration out of Turn 3 and the Peraltada, which Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said "definitely affected his lap" that ultimately counted in Q3. Hamilton "had to be very reserved" with the Turns 2/3 corner kerbs. Although the rest was smooth, he wound up 0.005s behind Russell.

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Verstappen started on red-walled softs, Hamilton on yellow-walled mediums

HONE

He was therefore getting into undercut range, which would have left Hamilton needing to pass a much slipperier car even with a tyre-life-age advantage late on.

"They were coming into my window," he explained. "Sergio had already stopped. They were going much quicker than me. So, if we stayed out longer, I would have come out behind Sergio and it would have been all over. I was basically tag-teamed by the Red Bulls. It's very hard in strategy when you don't have both cars there."

Mercedes therefore opted to pit Hamilton at the end of lap 29, with Russell – 1.8s behind Perez when the Red Bull stopped – staying out to lead in turn until lap 34. They were both given the hards for the second stint, which Mercedes initially believed was a race-winning move.

5 VERSTAPPEN'S GEARSHIFTS GLITCH WASN'T A BIGGER PROBLEM

But before tyre performance returned to being the oh-so-glamourous main reason for any one driver's success of the leading foursome,

Perez chases Verstappen and Hamilton through stunning stadium section

TEE

there was briefly a time when Verstappen might have lost the race.

This was three laps after his stop when he reported "the [gear] shifts are shit again". The thin air might make things an easier challenge for draggier packages, but it can be a car killer. However, it wasn't to be a terminal issue for Verstappen, who explained: "Just after the pitstop, I think the clutch was a bit warm. And after that it was OK."

Had Verstappen dropped out of the race with gearbox gremlins, that would have left Hamilton leading but under severe pressure from Perez and the packed crowd braying for a late-race battle. In any case that didn't come about and again the atmospheric conditions here made the difference.

6 COOLING CONCERNS STOPPED PEREZ ATTACKING HAMILTON

Hamilton had rejoined with a 6.5s gap to Verstappen and 2s back to Perez but, as ever with the white-walled rubber, the hards took a bit of time to get up to temperature. Here, Red Bull rued Perez's long stop, as he felt Hamilton "was struggling in the early laps with the hard tyre and that was our opportunity [to attack]".

He never got another one, despite also never getting dropped. This was because "once you get [the hards] going, he seemed to pull away a bit", Perez reflected, but also because the altitude here stifles racing due to the exertions applied to car cooling.

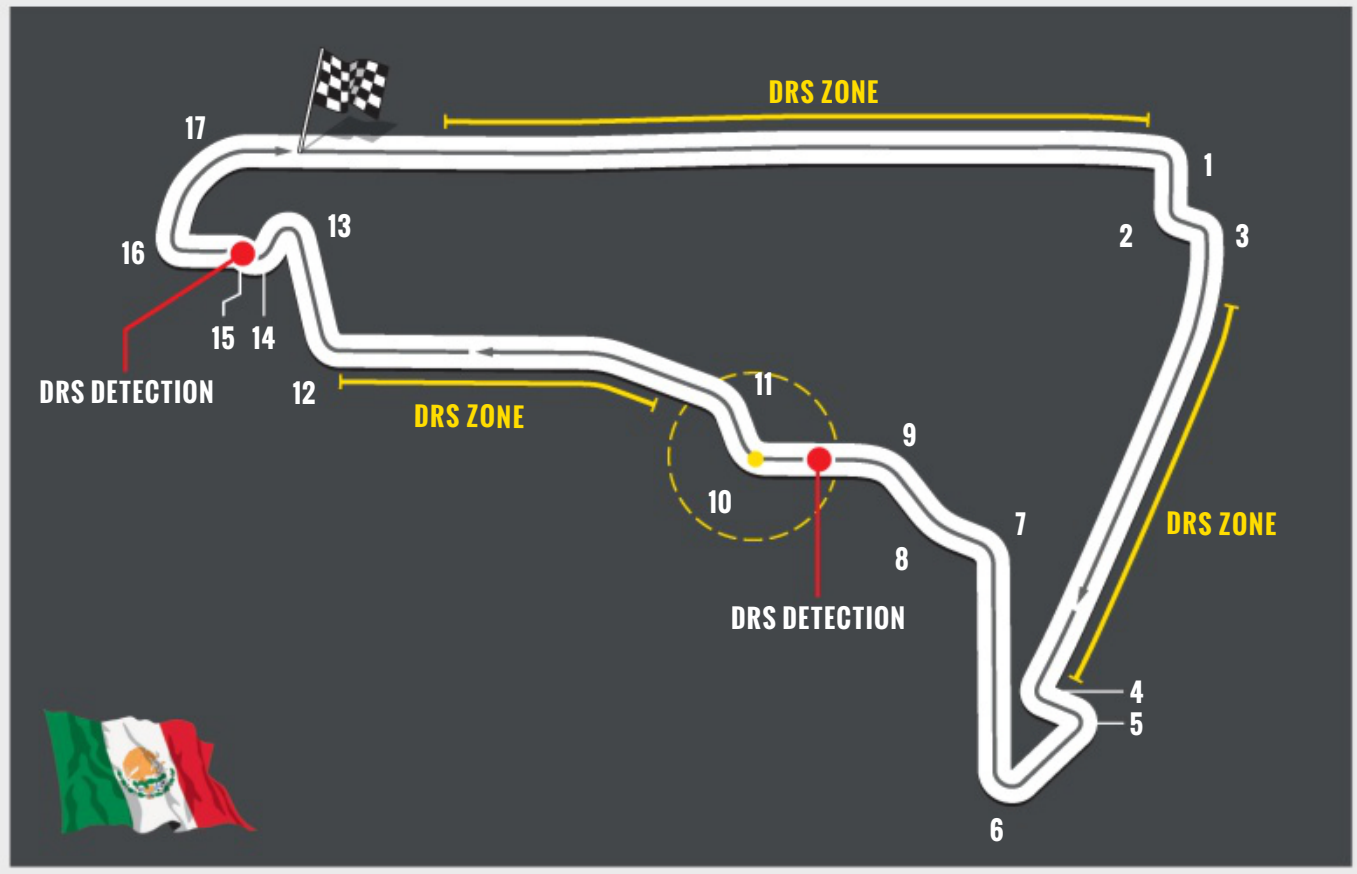
"Unfortunately, there was not much I could do because every time I was getting close to him, things were overheating: brakes, engine, tyres," Perez explained. "So, I had very few chances to attack him. I used DRS a few times but no more than that."

7 MERCEDES' STRATEGY EXPECTATIONS DIDN'T COME OFF

Like Ferrari in 2022, previously Mercedes' engines struggled in Mexico. But team gains – "pushing the boundaries to give the maximum performance", according to team boss Toto Wolff – were another key factor in why Mercedes was a real contender last weekend. It was also feeling the benefit of its Austin floor and front wing upgrade "delivering a good step in performance", according to Shovlin.

Mercedes therefore had Hamilton and Russell pressing on using the hards – a strategy call it went for as its "models said that a soft-hard »

TRACKSIDE VIEW



A second in-practice Pirelli test in seven days, this time for the softer prototype 2023 compounds at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez after the harder experimental rubber was run at Austin, is the perfect opportunity to assess the negative aspects of the new ground-effects Formula 1 cars.

The day before Autosport wanders trackside to the swooping fast sequence of turns that ends the Mexico City track's second sector in FP2, McLaren's Lando Norris did not hold back. "I would say I hate driving the cars comparing to last year," he mused, rather than spat. "They're a different challenge. I wouldn't say they're as enjoyable, just in terms of how comfortable they are and how much you can play around with hitting kerbs and lines and stuff like that. You're a bit more limited now."

Turns 10 and 11 here illustrate Norris's point perfectly. A mistake at the start of the preceding sequence begun by the rapid Turn 7 right will leave cars out of shape all the way to the track's third DRS zone exiting Turn 11 to our right. It's part of the specific Mexico City considerations – that the drivers stay nicely within the limit to minimise sliding, with the city's thin air at high altitude meaning there is less downforce to rely on to help sort things out. It's an issue across the grid, but one team engineer suggests it means that "the rich get richer".

"LECLERC LATER OVERTAKES US ON THE BACK OF A SCOOTER, AFTER ANOTHER ERROR"

It's Turn 10 we're most interested in given Norris's utterances and Max Verstappen spinning off after climbing the kerbs here in FP2. Alfa Romeo's Zhou Guanyu shows the problem before us on an early sighter on the prototype tyres as he whacks the Turn 10 kerbs – having come off a small but not insignificant bump from an asphalt patch join on the final approach – and gets all out of shape as a result. Both Carlos Sainz and Charles Leclerc have similar moments. The trick is not getting so tight as to destabilise the car, but also not straying too wide.

A short while later, Norris demonstrates his thoughts on kerbs – hitting the Turn 11 exit rumble strips and having to lift out of a massive sideways snap. It may not feel smooth to the pilot but it's exciting to watch.

The same cannot be said of the action at Turn 7 – the fast left where Leclerc loses his rear end midway through FP2 and crashes hard, later overtaking Autosport on the back of a scooter, possibly contemplating yet *another* error. Here, at a fast corner entry, the cars nevertheless look lazy, almost sluggish on turn-in. The drivers are fighting understeer and a bit of positive track camber – the tyres audibly screeching in displeasure.

Hefty car weight and driver-displeasing understeer – it's not the combination heralded by F1 for its new-era reset. But there are always things to be refined. It's clear what the drivers would like addressed.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Thin air contributes to understeer unhappiness, as Leclerc scoots past us

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Letting off some steam: Hamilton looks on as Verstappen roars

would go", per Wolff, with Mercedes starting on mediums in any case for added durability, and because its "models didn't say that a soft-medium would go". But while the C2 hard's longevity is certain, Isola explained that its "level of grip is not really known".

Just like for Ferrari in Hungary, this was a key part of Mercedes' undoing: it wasn't fast enough, even here with a tyre-life offset. And it was also wrong on Red Bull's mediums potentially dropping off badly at the end of the race.

Mercedes was "convinced that the medium was [dropping off] a cliff in the last part," per Isola, so much so it refused Russell's requests to switch strategy even as he ran 4s behind Perez and with over 30s in hand over Sainz in the closing stages. Mercedes hoped Perez would run out of tyre performance and when he didn't it finally pitted Russell for softs, with enough time left to make a successful raid for the fastest lap bonus point on the last tour.

Perez couldn't catch Hamilton, but took a popular home podium

8 ALONSO'S RETIREMENT TRIGGERS JUST A VSC

On lap 64, with Verstappen 13s ahead of Hamilton, Fernando Alonso retired in the runoff behind Turn 1, 13 tours after first losing one of his engine's six cylinders. This was a dangerous spot given the quickest cars down the main straight were arriving at 222mph. So, with marshals required to go out and retrieve the stricken Alpine, it would have been understandable for FIA officials to have sent out the safety car to bring those speeds down.

Instead, they opted for a virtual safety car, which lasted just under two minutes as Alonso's car was swiftly moved to safety. This reduced the teams' willingness to make a late extra stop, with Perez's position in any case snookering Mercedes in a way that meant it definitely was not able to stop Hamilton here. Red Bull also felt things were "sufficiently late not to do it", per Horner.

That all meant there was to be no late restart drama.

9 VERSTAPPEN IS TYRE MANAGEMENT MASTER

All while Hamilton was questioning Mercedes' decision to run the hards and it was insisting its analysis predicted the Red Bulls losing out late on, Verstappen was serenely running away with the race, eventually winning by 15.2s. Over the whole of his rival's second stint, he pulled away from Hamilton by 0.189s on average each time — VSC-impacted tours notwithstanding — lapping everyone up to Leclerc in sixth as he did so. He hadn't wanted to touch the hards after feeling his FP1 sampling "just didn't really feel great".

The RB18's higher downforce aided tyre wear given the handling benefits that brings even though the thin air reduces that effect. Plus, it could ride the kerbs well enough to minimise the critical sliding factor.

"When [the stint-one softs] came off the car, there was still a lot of life left in them," Horner concluded of Verstappen's tyre prowess. "That gave us even more confidence that the medium tyre would be fine as a one-stop [option].

"It was a question of again just not abusing that tyre, which is something he's been masterful at this year."

NEXT F1 REPORT

BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX
17 NOVEMBER ISSUE

RICCIARDO STARS DESPITE TSUNODA CLASH PENALTY

Daniel Ricciardo turned in arguably the finest stint of his otherwise dismal season after bolting on a set of the soft compound Pirellis for a sprint to the chequered flag.

The Australian started 11th and managed his medium tyres to lap 44 before pitting. His outing was then marred by an uncharacteristically clumsy attempted pass on Yuki Tsunoda, with the McLaren boldly lunging up the inside only to clatter the AlphaTauri into retirement.

Ricciardo copped a 10-second penalty for his troubles but, once clear of the stricken AT03, had the pace to require the team to ask Lando Norris to move aside before he then took care of Valtteri Bottas and both Alpines. Such was his turn of speed on the soft tyre that Ricciardo cleared away from Esteban Ocon to effectively render his penalty meaningless as he didn't drop a place and retained seventh. He was also voted 'Driver of the Day' by viewers.

"I still felt that I had pace on the soft, so I just got my head down and got on with it," said Ricciardo. "Lando let me by, so that let me keep attacking. When I saw the Alpines right in front of me, I was like, 'Alright, it's game on here'."

TEE

HONE

Ferrari claims slump in form will be a one-off

A turned-down turbo and an unsettled chassis helped explain the almost anonymous Ferrari showing of 2022 in Mexico.

Carlos Sainz crossed the line nearly a minute down on winner Max Verstappen as he clocked only fifth place, with Charles Leclerc sixth.

The team consensus is that the major regression seen last weekend will be a one-off, and the brace of F1-75s will be more in the hunt come the Sao Paulo Grand Prix in a fortnight. Nevertheless, team boss Mattia Binotto explained the factors that left his drivers' race pace to sit only marginally ahead of the midfield.

He said: "The ride was not great. The balance was not great. [The drivers] will tell me that the car was not turning. The reason why, I think it has to be looked at and we have not a clear explanation." That assessment would tally with Leclerc's FP2 shunt, a scare on the way to the grid and his mid-race heart-stopping moment when the car stepped out of line through the Turns 10-11 chicane.

"Certainly, in terms of power unit, we were not at our best," Binotto added in deference to the turbo, which was hampered by the high-altitude and lingering reliability concerns.

Leclerc gave his brusque assessment: "It was incredibly difficult. We were just so slow. We need to look into it. We were in the middle of nowhere. We were way slower compared to the Mercedes and Red Bull, [but] much quicker than the midfield. So, we were on our own. A very lonely race. There wasn't much we could have done more today."

Mercedes now sits just 40 points adrift of Ferrari in the fight for second place in the constructors' standings.

BIG NUMBER

2016

The last time the Mexican Grand Prix was won by the polesitter (Lewis Hamilton)

Q&A

VALTTERI BOTTAS
ALFA ROMEO DRIVER

SUTTON

Was dropping four places from sixth on the grid a fair reflection of a tough race?
It was difficult, especially the second stint with the hard tyre. I just couldn't get the tyre to work, especially the front axle. It was below the working range all the time. If I could do the race again, I would for sure go for the soft tyre in the final stint. There were some cars that were really flying on the soft.

Many people were saying before the race that the hard tyre was the least desirable. Why use it?
I tried the hard tyre in FP1 and it felt half-decent, but that was only a handful of laps. It felt OK in the beginning but then very quickly it was just below the operating window in terms of temperature. We thought it would be OK, but it wasn't today. It's easy to say that afterwards… With another tyre, it might have been a different story. At least it's one point – it's been 11 races since I last scored points. That's something. And, at least we scored more than Aston Martin.

Was the strong pace earlier in the weekend down to the track or the Alfa upgrades?
We'll see in the next races. We were in Q3 in Austin and should have been in the points, so I hope it's going to be like this for the last two races. I see no reason why we shouldn't be there. Race pace wise, Alpine and McLaren seemed faster, so we weren't far off where we belonged.

Did you experience any cooling issues today like many other drivers?
The front brakes, yes, at the beginning, when I was close to Fernando [Alonso], but only at the beginning. I had to save the brakes a bit but, at the end of the stint, I couldn't keep up with him. In the beginning we felt strong but, towards the end, he was going away from us. Good, clean air at the beginning would have really helped but it's hard to estimate how much.

HONE

Gasly close to race ban after pushing boundaries with Stroll

Pierre Gasly will be skating on thin ice until May next season. The AlphaTauri racer is just two licence points short of a race ban after his five-second penalty for leaving the track and gaining an advantage while battling Lance Stroll.

The 11th-place finisher was particularly frustrated he wasn't told to drop back behind the Aston Martin. Gasly said: "If you are not happy about it, tell me to give the position back, and then I will try again. I wasn't given any comments, so that is a shame. [The FIA] just need to say it on the radio. That is what they have done in the past. For some reason, not this time."

Stroll finished 15th, one spot behind team-mate Sebastian Vettel – the German having nursed his starting soft tyres longer than anyone else to pit on lap 38. Both Astons struggled for speed all weekend.

BINGHAM

ALONSO RUES ANOTHER ALPINE ENGINE FAILURE

Alpine has been "unprepared", so said Fernando Alonso following another power unit glitch. This time, a cylinder failure forced him to retire in the closing stages while running in seventh place.

The Spaniard started ninth, just ahead of team-mate Esteban Ocon, and enjoyed a spirited launch to pull past Lando Norris and Valtteri Bottas. Alonso appeared to have the pace to hold station as he kept out of DRS range of the Alfa Romeo before eventually building a cushion of four seconds. But on lap 52, his engine first began to ail before the Aston Martin-bound driver pulled up behind Turn 1 to trigger a virtual safety car.

A typically outspoken Alonso said: "The engine cannot finish the races. It cannot be bad luck when you have to change six or seven engines as we did, and still not finishing races. I think [the team] have some job to do over the winter, hopefully not too much.

"My level is very high at this point of the season, and the standings at the end of the year will be one of the lowest. It's a little bit frustrating, but there's nothing I can do."

Ocon was similarly stymied. A need to lift and coast to manage spiking temperatures meant he dropped 12.2s adrift of Daniel Ricciardo, so wasn't elevated to seventh by the Australian's 10s penalty for hitting Yuki Tsunoda.

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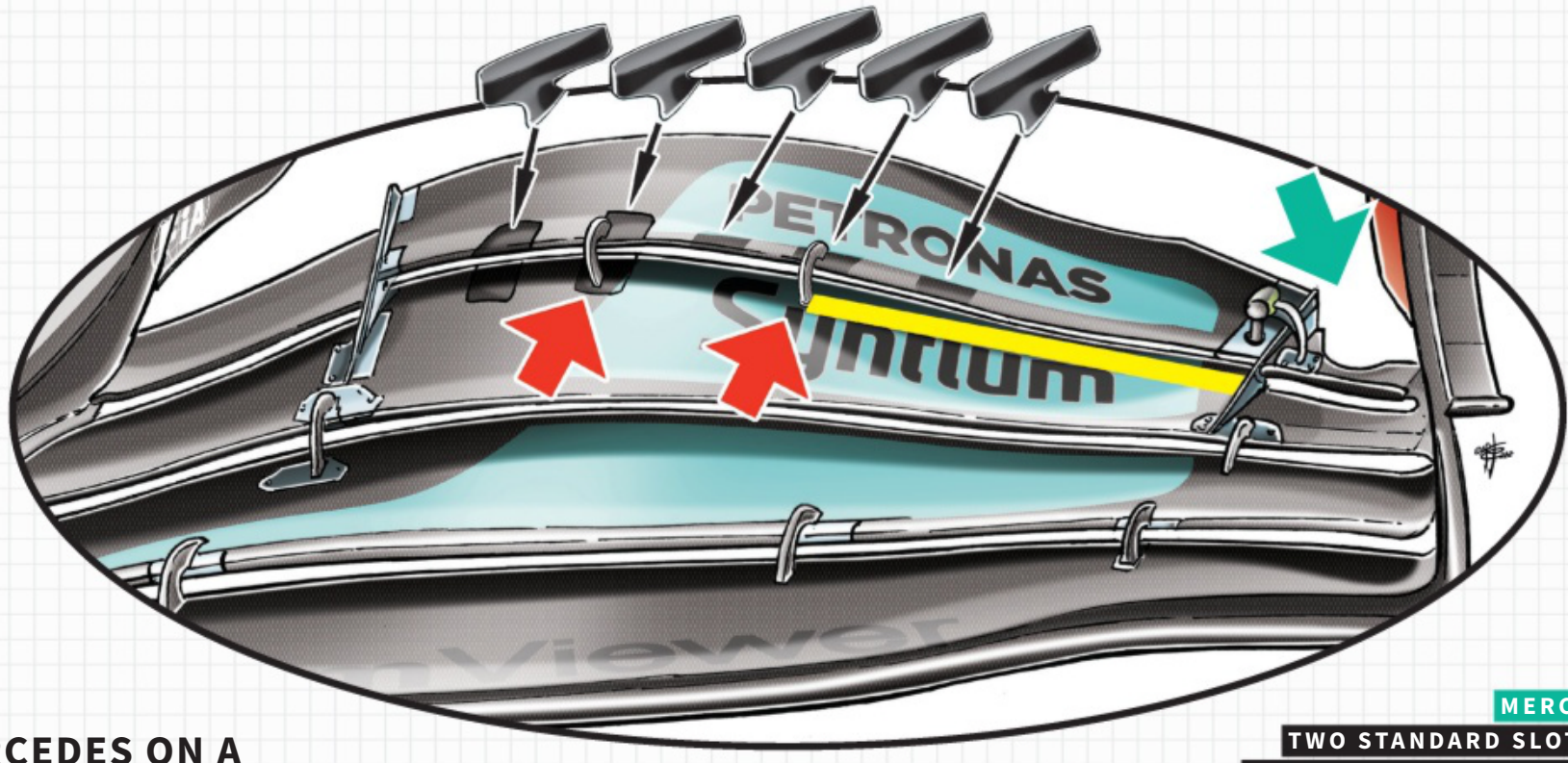


MERCEDES
TWO STANDARD SLOT-GAP SEPARATORS NOW FEATURED

MERCEDES ON A HIGH IN MEXICO ALTITUDE

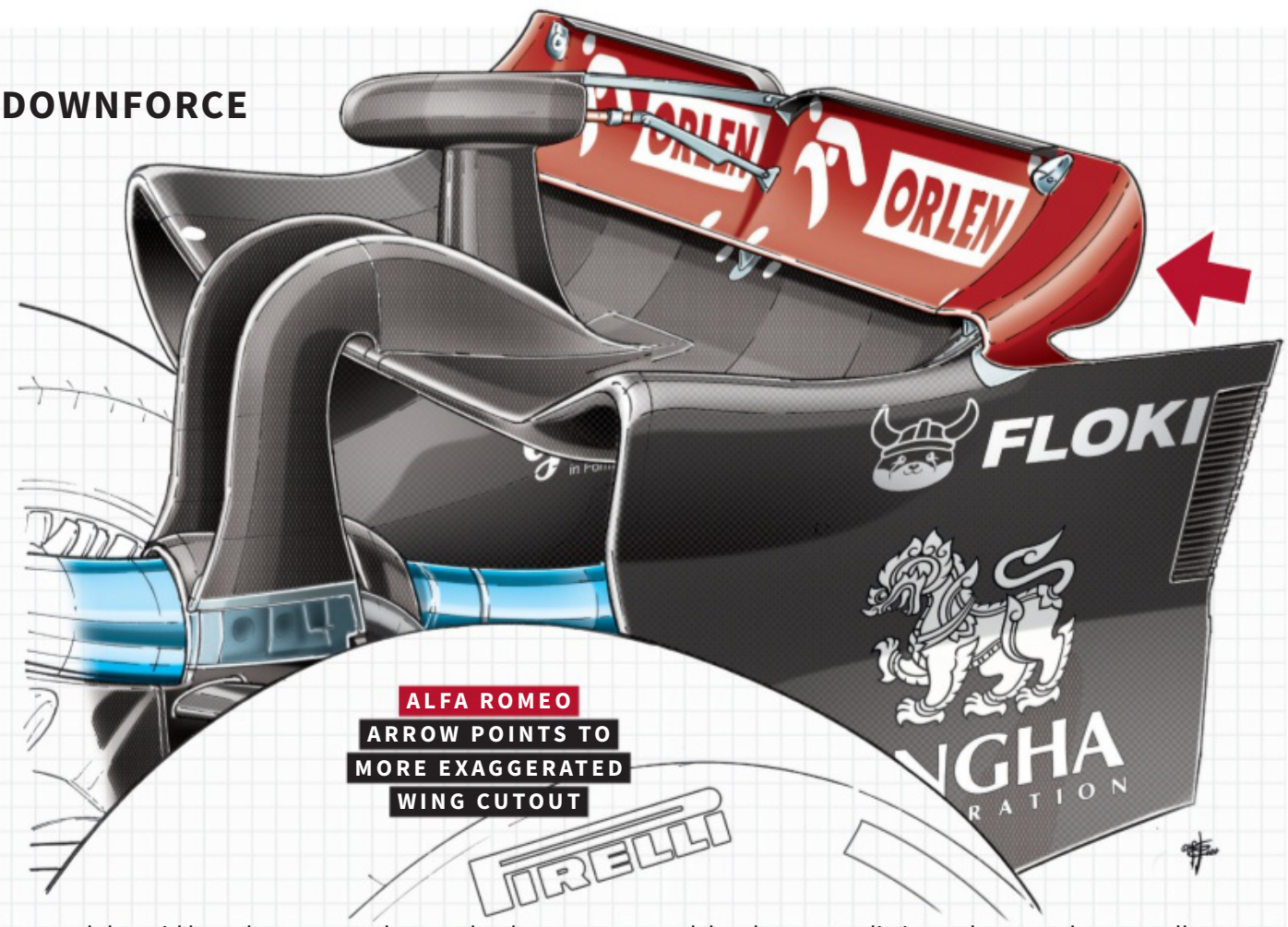
After the FIA had raised its displeasure at the front wing Mercedes brought to the party ahead of the United States Grand Prix, the team had to rework its design without the quintet of fins straddling the upper slot gap for the Mexico race. The fins were replaced with two standard slot-gap separators, but the rest of the front wing remained in the same configuration as the original development-spec wing that went unused at Austin a week earlier.

Generally, the W13's flaws were less exposed by the altitude in Mexico City compared to the other circuits on the calendar, owing to the reduced drag penalty amid the 22% drop in air density. The 2022 Mercedes has been burdened by more drag compared to the top two teams, which has partially hindered the Brackley squad's progress throughout the year. But with that thinner air, the power required from the engine to overcome that drag is reduced.

"I think for many years, Mexico wasn't a good place for us because of the altitude," explained team principal Toto Wolff. "But the power unit guys have given us a super-strong engine here. We suffered less from our draggy car here, while running high downforce like all the others."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

CLAWING BACK LOST DOWNFORCE



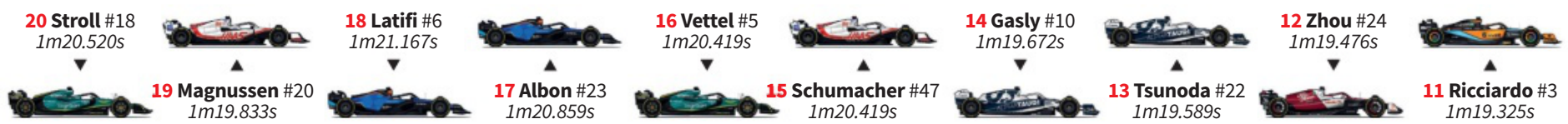
ALFA ROMEO ARROW POINTS TO MORE EXAGGERATED WING CUTOUT

Alfa Romeo turned up with a marginally different rear wing for Mexico, featuring a more dramatic cutout where the upper element meets the endplate. This has more of a distinct wing tip, which should introduce vorticity at the trailing edge, which the aerodynamicists can use to try and improve the efficiency of the wing.

When developing downforce, the outer edges tend to produce less compared to the centre. By trying to create a vortex with the exposed edge, it should ensure there is a more even pressure difference to produce more downforce. This is vital in high-altitude conditions; although the decreased air density cuts drag, it also reduces downforce. This means that the teams try to run their highest-downforce configurations at the track to compensate.

The other effects of the high altitude chiefly involve the powertrain; the cooling vents around the grid have been opened up to their maximum owing to the reduced mass flow of air through the system to ensure the internals do not overheat. Furthermore, the turbocharger must work harder to compress the air before reaching the internal combustion engine to address the overall deficit. In the late 1980s, the turbo cars had a distinct edge over the normally aspirated contingent in Mexico thanks to the ability to compress air for combustion.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sainz	1m20.707s
2	Leclerc	1m20.753s
3	Perez	1m20.827s
4	Verstappen	1m20.827s
5	Hamilton	1m20.849s
6	Alonso	1m20.899s
7	Bottas	1m21.083s
8	Norris	1m21.120s
9	Gasly	1m21.310s
10	Vettel	1m21.525s
11	Ricciardo	1m21.762s
12	Zhou	1m21.820s
13	Stroll	1m21.865s
14	Schumacher	1m21.952s
15	Latifi	1m22.912s
16	Lawson	1m23.861s
17	Sargeant	1m24.246s
18	de Vries	1m24.582s
19	Doohan	1m24.615s
20	Fittipaldi	1m26.766s

WEATHER Sunny, air 27-30C track 46-49C

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Russell	1m19.970s
2	Tsunoda	1m20.798s
3	Ocon	1m21.177s
4	Hamilton	1m21.509s
5	Perez	1m21.579s
6	Verstappen	1m21.588s
7	Leclerc	1m21.618s
8	Sainz	1m21.693s
9	Bottas	1m21.993s
10	Gasly	1m22.104s
11	Alonso	1m22.337s
12	Vettel	1m22.371s
13	Albon	1m22.447s
14	Norris	1m22.738s
15	Ricciardo	1m22.763s
16	Stroll	1m22.840s
17	Schumacher	1m22.879s
18	Magnussen	1m23.316s
19	Latifi	1m23.320s
20	Zhou	1m23.369s

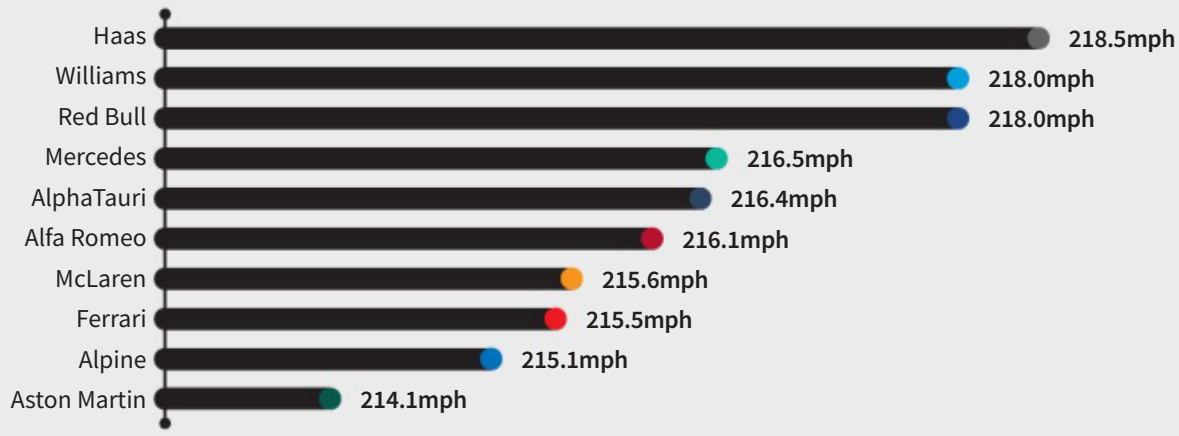
WEATHER Overcast, air 26-29C track: 34-41C

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Russell	1m18.399s
2	Hamilton	1m18.543s
3	Verstappen	1m18.876s
4	Leclerc	1m19.123s
5	Perez	1m19.241s
6	Sainz	1m19.301s
7	Norris	1m19.317s
8	Bottas	1m19.390s
9	Tsunoda	1m19.882s
10	Albon	1m19.917s
11	Ocon	1m19.960s
12	Zhou	1m20.019s
13	Alonso	1m20.037s
14	Ricciardo	1m20.139s
15	Gasly	1m20.330s
16	Stroll	1m20.477s
17	Schumacher	1m20.598s
18	Latifi	1m20.848s
19	Vettel	1m20.986s
20	Magnussen	1m21.271s

WEATHER Sunny, air 23-26C track 37-43C

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m19.169s
2	Verstappen	1m19.222s
3	Leclerc	1m19.505s
4	Bottas	1m19.523s
5	Sainz	1m19.566s
6	Russell	1m19.583s
7	Perez	1m19.706s
8	Norris	1m19.857s
9	Tsunoda	1m19.907s
10	Ocon	1m19.945s
11	Alonso	1m20.006s
12	Gasly	1m20.256s
13	Ricciardo	1m20.279s
14	Zhou	1m20.283s
15	Magnussen	1m20.293s
16	Schumacher	1m20.419s
17	Vettel	1m20.419s
18	Stroll	1m20.520s
19	Albon	1m20.859s
20	Latifi	1m21.167s

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m18.552s
2	Sainz	1m18.560s
3	Russell	1m18.565s
4	Verstappen	1m18.566s
5	Perez	1m18.615s
6	Bottas	1m18.762s
7	Ocon	1m19.081s
8	Leclerc	1m19.109s
9	Norris	1m19.119s
10	Alonso	1m19.272s
11	Ricciardo	1m19.325s
12	Zhou	1m19.476s
13	Tsunoda	1m19.589s
14	Gasly	1m19.672s
15	Magnussen	1m19.833s

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m17.775s
2	Russell	1m18.079s
3	Hamilton	1m18.084s
4	Perez	1m18.128s
5	Sainz	1m18.351s
6	Bottas	1m18.401s
7	Leclerc	1m18.555s
8	Norris	1m18.721s
9	Alonso	1m18.939s
10	Ocon	1m19.010s

WEATHER Sunny, air 27-30C track 44-48C

NEXT RACE
13 NOVEMBER
SAO PAULO GP
Interlagos

SEASON STATS

	DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1	Verstappen	416	1	1
2	Perez	280	1	1
3	Leclerc	275	1	1
4	Russell	231	2	1
5	Hamilton	216	2	3
6	Sainz	212	1	1
7	Norris	111	3	3
8	Ocon	82	4	5
9	Alonso	71	5	2
10	Bottas	47	5	5
11	Vettel	36	6	9
12	Ricciardo	35	5	6
13	Magnussen	24	5	4
14	Gasly	23	5	6
15	Stroll	13	6	7
16	Schumacher	12	6	6
17	Tsunoda	12	7	8
18	Zhou	6	8	9
19	Albon	4	9	9
20	Latifi	2	9	10
21	de Vries	2	9	13
22	Hulkenberg	0	12	17

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Red Bull	696
2	Ferrari	487
3	Mercedes	447
4	Alpine	153
5	McLaren	146
6	Alfa Romeo	53
7	Aston Martin	49
8	Haas	36
9	AlphaTauri	35
10	Williams	8

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	**11**	7	Russell
Verstappen	**16**	3	Perez
Leclerc	**13**	4	Sainz
Ricciardo	1	**18**	**Norris**
Alonso	**9**	8	Ocon
Gasly	**10**	8	Tsunoda
Vettel	**11**	7	Stroll
Stroll	**1**	**1**	**Hulkenberg**
Latifi	2	**16**	**Albon**
Latifi	0	**1**	**de Vries**
Zhou	5	**14**	**Bottas**
Magnussen	**15**	5	Schumacher

Sessions ignored when a driver could not record a representative time

WINS

Verstappen	14
Leclerc	3
Perez	2
Sainz	1

POLE POSITIONS

Leclerc	9
Verstappen	6
Sainz	3
Perez	1
Russell	1

FASTEST LAPS

Verstappen	5
Leclerc	3
Perez	3
Russell	3
Hamilton	2
Sainz	2
Norris	1
Zhou	1

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STARTING GRID

10 Ocon #31 *1m19.010s*	**9** Alonso #14 *1m18.939s*	**8** Norris #4 *1m18.721s*	**7** Leclerc #16 *1m18.555s*	**6** Bottas #77 *1m18.401s*	**5** Sainz #55 *1m18.351s*	**4** Perez #11 *1m18.128s*	**3** Hamilton #44 *1m18.084s*	**2** Russell #63 *1m18.079s*	**1** Verstappen #1 *1m17.775s*

RACE RESULTS ROUND 20/22 (71 LAPS – 189.74 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	**Max Verstappen** (NLD)	Red Bull	1h38m36.729s	61	**S**u, **M**n
2	**Lewis Hamilton** (GBR)	Mercedes	+15.186s	5	**M**n, **H**n
3	**Sergio Perez** (MEX)	Red Bull	+18.097s		**S**u, **M**n
4	**George Russell** (GBR)	Mercedes	+49.431s	5	**M**n, **H**n, **S**u
5	**Carlos Sainz Jr** (ESP)	Ferrari	+58.123s		**S**u, **M**n
6	**Charles Leclerc** (MCO)	Ferrari	+1m08.774s		**S**u, **M**n
7	**Daniel Ricciardo** (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap/+32.537s		**M**n, **S**n
8	**Esteban Ocon** (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+34.729s		**M**n, **H**n
9	**Lando Norris** (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	-1 lap/+38.994s		**M**n, **H**n
10	**Valtteri Bottas** (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap/+42.379s		**M**n, **H**u
11	**Pierre Gasly** (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Red Bull	-1 lap/+43.004s		**M**n, **S**n
12	**Alexander Albon** (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+44.903s		**M**n, **S**n
13	**Zhou Guanyu** (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap/+56.032s		**M**n, **S**n
14	**Sebastian Vettel** (DEU)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+59.498s		**S**n, **M**u
15	**Lance Stroll** (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+1m09.953s		**M**u, **S**u, **S**n
16	**Mick Schumacher** (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+1m18.884s		**S**u, **M**n
17	**Kevin Magnussen** (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+1m20.416s		**M**n, **S**u
18	**Nicholas Latifi** (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps/+54.923s		**S**n, **H**n, **S**n
19	**Fernando Alonso** (ESP)	Alpine-Renault	-8 laps-engine		**M**n, **H**n
R	**Yuki Tsunoda** (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Red Bull	50 laps-accident damage		**S**n, **M**n

WEATHER Sunny, air 25-30C track 35-45C

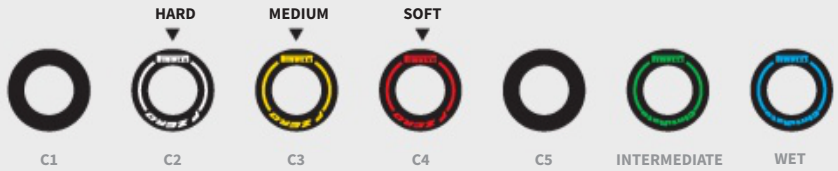
WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 115.445mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 120.117mph

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	**Russell**	1m20.153s	-	71
2	**Perez**	1m21.775s	+1.622s	30
3	**Ricciardo**	1m22.022s	+1.869s	48
4	**Verstappen**	1m22.046s	+1.893s	36
5	**Hamilton**	1m22.062s	+1.909s	32
6	**Sainz**	1m22.199s	+2.046s	32
7	**Zhou**	1m22.260s	+2.107s	47
8	**Gasly**	1m22.277s	+2.124s	42
9	**Stroll**	1m22.463s	+2.310s	42
10	**Leclerc**	1m22.603s	+2.450s	48
11	**Alonso**	1m22.866s	+2.713s	48
12	**Albon**	1m22.914s	+2.761s	48
13	**Vettel**	1m23.086s	+2.933s	45
14	**Ocon**	1m23.279s	+3.126s	48
15	**Magnussen**	1m23.300s	+3.147s	49
16	**Bottas**	1m23.363s	+3.210s	43
17	**Norris**	1m23.402s	+3.249s	48
18	**Tsunoda**	1m23.403s	+3.250s	48
19	**Schumacher**	1m23.641s	+3.488s	30
20	**Latifi**	1m23.709s	+3.556s	56

TYRES

KEY: **H - Hard** **M - Medium** **S - Soft** **I - Intermediate** **W - Wet** n - New set u - Used set



RACE BRIEFING

FP1

LIAM LAWSON replaced **TSUNODA** at AlphaTauri

LOGAN SARGEANT replaced **ALBON** at Williams

NYCK DE VRIES replaced **RUSSELL** at Mercedes

JACK DOOHAN replaced **OCON** at Alpine

PIETRO FITTIPALDI replaced **MAGNUSSEN** at Haas

GRID PENALTIES

MAGNUSSEN Five-place penalty for additional power unit elements used

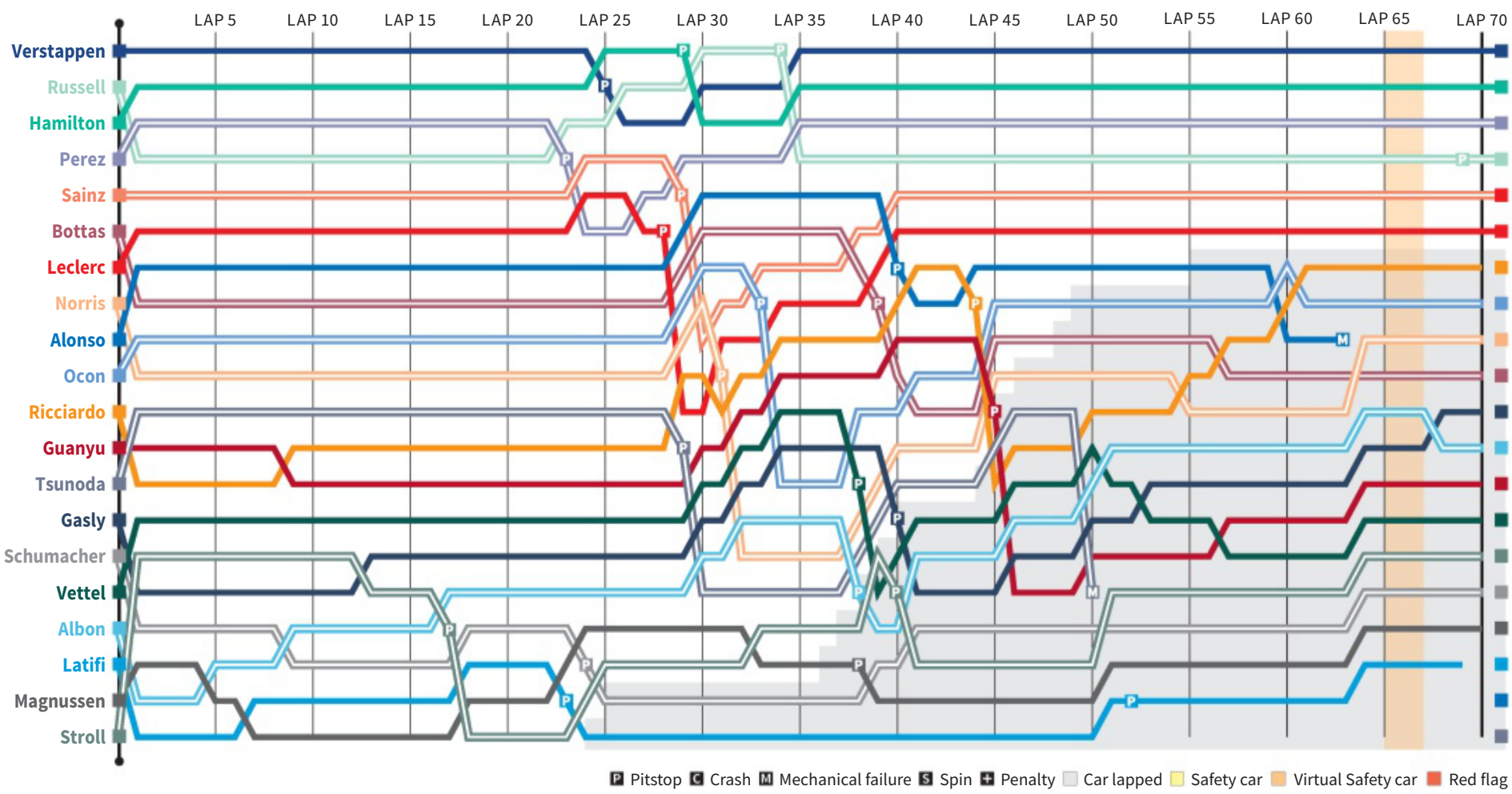
STROLL Three-place penalty for causing a clash in previous race

RACE PENALTIES

GASLY Five-second penalty and one licence point for leaving the track and gaining a lasting advantage

RICCIARDO 10s penalty and two licence points for causing a collision with Tsunoda

LAP CHART What happened, when



RECORD-BREAKER VERSTAPPEN IN A CLASS OF HIS OWN

The world champion is the sole top-scorer in Mexico, while it's Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso who tie a point short

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES

LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **3rd** — Result **2nd**

9 Can't score the maximum because of Q3 track-limits error, which meant he drove conservatively on his second run and wound up adrift of Russell and missing a (slim) pole shot. Aced the start then harried Verstappen in stint one, but was never going to attack the slippery Red Bull.

GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **2nd** — Result **4th**

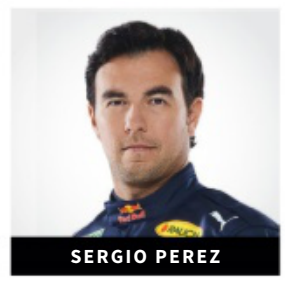
8 Improved well across qualifying to be Verstappen's closest challenger, but loses a mark for run-two mistakes that he felt cost pole. At first corners was too cautious after recent gaffes, Perez got by and strategy was compromised. Hards pace impressive, and he got the fastest lap.

RED BULL

MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

10 An obvious maximum score. Felt he made a small mistake releasing his clutch at the start, but it didn't matter with his sterling defence in the opening moments. Managed the delicate softs so well in stint one he didn't have to do too much on the mediums and romped to an F1 win record.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **4th** — Result **3rd**

8 Gets a pass for qualifying behind both Mercedes cars and 0.353s gap to Verstappen because of electric gremlins. Nailed Russell opportunistically on lap one, but couldn't stay with Hamilton in stint one, which also hurts his score. Might have still got the Merc but for slow pitstop.

FERRARI

CHARLES LECLERC

Started **7th** — Result **6th**

7 Isn't to blame for Ferrari's woeful showing. Isn't marked down for being 0.204s behind Sainz in qualifying and Bottas too, as an engine issue and his DRS not opening late in Q3 hurt him. He passed Bottas nicely at Turn 1, but does lose a mark for his poor race pace compared to Sainz.

CARLOS SAINZ

Started **5th** — Result **5th**

8 Given Ferrari was down on power and all at sea with handling due to the reduced downforce effect in the thin air, there's not much else he could do and so his mark reflects this. Fended off Leclerc well on lap one and was the faster of the two to the finish, passing Alonso neatly post-pitstop.

McLAREN

DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **11th** — Result **7th**

7 Lost two places at start dipping a wheel on the grass then being outmuscled by Zhou, then battled by the Alfa before running long on mediums. Was rapid post-pitstop but Tsunoda shunt was so poor. His drive after being waved by Norris was brilliant to negate penalty, but crash costs chance of higher mark.

LANDO NORRIS

Started **8th** — Result **9th**

7 Pleased to beat both Alpines and start eighth, but loses the mark that he would have gained by falling behind both with wheelspin-heavy start. Played team game post-pitstop and allowed Ricciardo – on the better strategy – by. Kept the pressure on and passed Bottas late on the brakes at Turn 1.

ALPINE

FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **9th** — Result **19th**

9 Opted against trying a Q3 banker on used tyres, which boosts grading his solo effort to beat Ocon. Feisty and fast at the start, powering past Norris and outbraving Bottas into Turn 1, before defending against then dropping the Alfa. Surely had seventh sealed before he retired.

ESTEBAN OCON

Started **10th** — Result **8th**

8 No shame in qualifying 0.071s behind Alonso. In the race, he passed Norris into Turn 1, then ran adrift of Bottas until he put in an excellent outside-Turn-1 pass early in his second stint. Went by ailing team-mate, then cooling problems meant he had to urgently lift-and-coast, aiding Ricciardo's pass.

ALPHATAURI

PIERRE GASLY

Started **14th** - Result **11th**

5 The slower AlphaTauri in qualifying. Lost out to the Astons getting pinched at Turn 2, but did mug Schumacher at Turn 6. Penalty picked up while repassing was poor – went too deep and forced Stroll off-track, going off himself. At least showed strong softs pace gaining places late on.

YUKI TSUNODA

Started **13th** — Result **R**

7 Rued not getting tyres fully up to temperature for last Q2 run, but still beat Gasly. Jumped Zhou and Ricciardo into Turn 1 then chased Norris before making a stop for mediums McLaren had to react to, to ward off an undercut threat. Was still splitting the McLarens when Ricciardo took him out.

ASTON MARTIN

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Started **16th** · Result **14th**

6 Aston's run of form ended, as it couldn't find enough grip in faster corners. After making ground at the start, drove excellently in first stint on softs as he chased Zhou. Losing time passing Tsunoda rejoining post-Ricciardo crash helped Albon and Gasly close in and then pass.

LANCE STROLL

Started **20th** Result **15th**

5 Qualified behind Vettel but doesn't lose a mark as their placings reflected Aston's Mexico position. What does cost him is his poor pace on the mediums that were the best race tyre, as he lasted just 17 laps when Vettel managed 38 on the more fragile softs.

WILLIAMS

NICHOLAS LATIFI

Started **18th** · Result **18th**

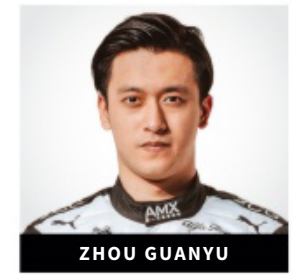
4 Finished Q1 last, 0.308s behind Albon's banker. Too timid opening meant falling to last – having gained from Magnussen and Stroll's grid penalties. Repassed Magnussen but picked up some early damage then struggled for pace. Finished two laps down on the slower two-stop strategy.

ALEX ALBON

Started **17th** · Result **12th**

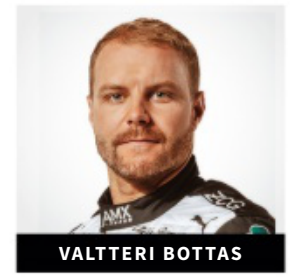
7 Williams had no explanation for Q1 Turn 8 slip off, but wind wasn't a factor. Jumped by Magnussen off the line, but got him back, then passed Schumacher too. Managed brake and tyre temperatures well and then, when given the softs for stint two, showed strong pace and finished just 2.5s off a point.

ALFA ROMEO


ZHOU GUANYU

Started **12th** Result **13th**

6 A couple of things add up to lower mark versus Bottas. One was not making Q3 when Bottas did. The other was his pace on the best strategy after running long on the mediums chasing Ricciardo in stint one. Aided Bottas in his Ocon battle before pitting, but it ultimately didn't matter.


VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **6th** — Result **10th**

8 High mark comes from the strength of his qualifying performance to split the Ferraris. Leclerc and Alonso jumped him too easily at the start, and never getting the hard tyres up to temperature in stint two meant he lost further positions from that promising grid slot.

HAAS

KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started **19th** · Result **17th**

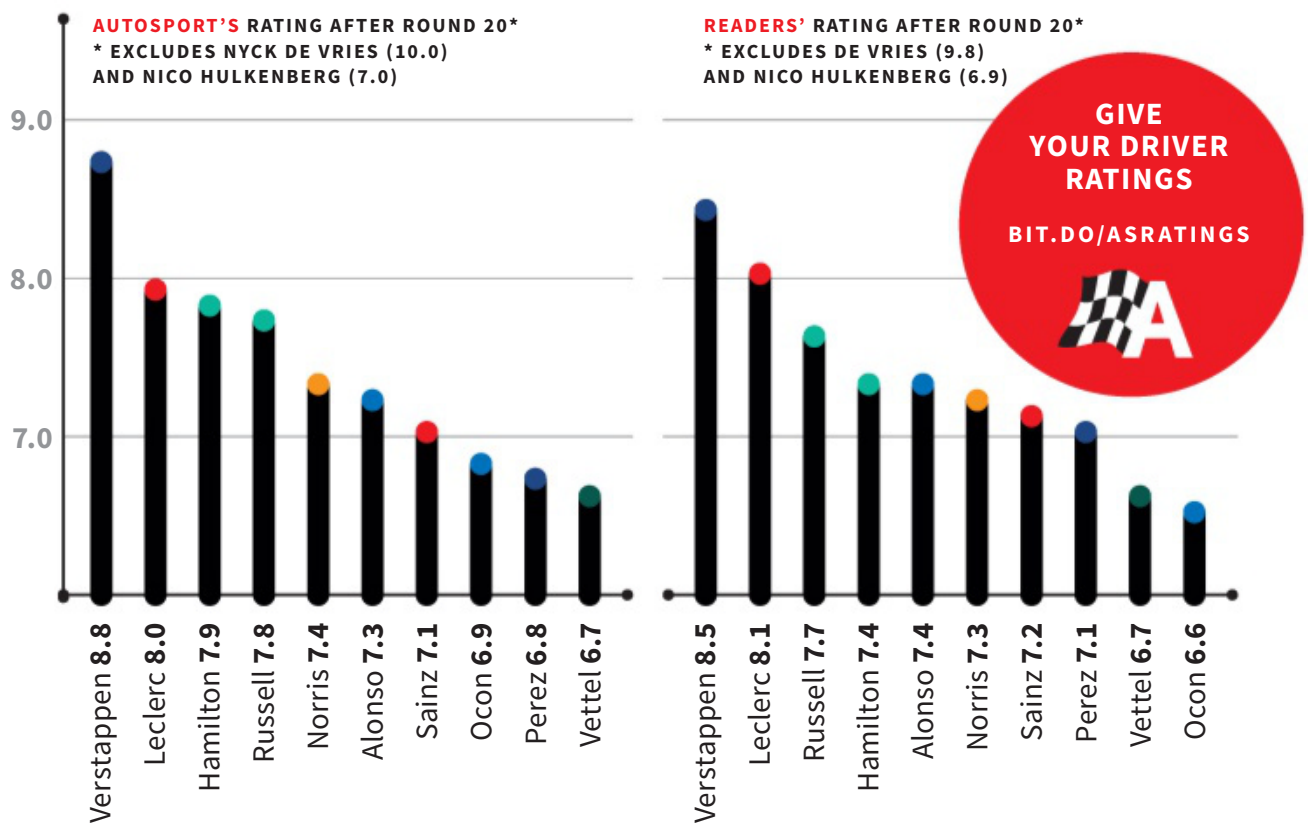
5 Was unfortunate an FP1 ICE failure with Pietro Fittipaldi aboard meant he'd cop a grid penalty, but still made Q2 when his team-mate did not. Scythed past the Williams cars off the line but was soon repassed and, like his team-mate, he lacked pace on either compound.

MICK SCHUMACHER

Started **15th** · Result **16th**

5 Can't score higher because of Q2 error cutting Turn 2 kerbs too much. In the race, lost out to fast-starting Astons, then should have warded off Gasly later on lap one. Lacked pace in cooler temperatures as he fell away and was repassed by Albon. Edged team-mate to the flag.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



BENICHOU/SRO

ITALY TOPS MEDAL HAUL AS MOTORSPORT GAMES SHINE

More contests and a bigger entry made for a stronger event than the inaugural 2019 Games and the result remained open to the finale

STEVE WHITFIELD AND DAN MASON

The second running of the FIA Motorsport Games took place at Paul Ricard last weekend with the aim of being bigger and better than the inaugural event in Rome in 2019. And it comfortably succeeded despite the challenges that came with expanding such a format.

The Circuit de Castellet played host over four days of action, all of which took place under sunny skies, proving well-equipped to host different events around the site in addition to those taking place on the circuit itself.

There was an Olympic-style feel to the event throughout, as people moved around the venue to take in the various disciplines taking place, and competitors cheered on their team-mates when not in action themselves.

That was evident when members of the British team, having suffered disappointment in their own events, rushed over to the Esports arena to cheer on James Baldwin to gold. And other nations shared that same camaraderie.

The competition between nations was close, with Italy surpassing France in the final event of the weekend to finish at the top of the medal table.

"It's been fantastic," said the Games' founder Stephane Ratel. "We have been blessed by the weather — in Rome [in 2019] it rained non-stop for three days. The racing, the enthusiasm of the participants, the public attendance, we're very, very pleased."

The inclusion of less-familiar events such as Auto Slalom alongside karting as well as GT and single-seater racing was well-received, with crowds also flocking to watch the drifting. And the addition of some well-known names competing against emerging drivers and nations in the likes of the GT and F4 disciplines brought more attention.

BEAUMONT/SRO

Ratel was very happy with second edition of the Games

"The idea is, we want to combine top drivers with a lot of grassroots," Ratel added. "We want the sporting credibility with a few top names but also the categories where the whole world can compete and have a chance of victory."

There were notable absences, however, with the USA and Japan not fielding teams. But overall, there was a feeling that the event will only grow as it heads to the third edition of the games in Valencia in 2024.

Oliver Oaks, whose Hitech GP team ran the cars in the F4 discipline, was one of many to praise Ratel's format. "You can't help but think he's really on to something, Stephane, with his vision for it, having all these different disciplines all here and seeing all the countries huddled together," he said. "It's really exciting, to have had a full year of racing and to come and do something different. It's really exciting to see different kids from different backgrounds.

"Everybody's realised what a great event it is now and wants to be part of it, and I dare say, Kimi [Antonelli] and Charlie [Wurz] coming and a few others, it's really put it on the map."

Campbell took the 'big one' for Australia in GT Sprint

Australia and France triumph in GTs

The GT contests lived up to their billing as the signature events of the games, with the weekend-closing sprint race proving decisive at the top of the medal table.

Belgium's Dries Vanthoor won the qualifying race to take pole position, but it was Australia's Matt Campbell who made the better start to grab the lead ahead of fellow Porsche 911 driver Ayhancan Guven, while Vanthoor dropped to fourth on the opening lap.

Guven held second for the first 15 minutes of the hour-long encounter before Italy's Mirko Bortolotti moved by at Turn 6, and the Turkish driver was eventually ordered to let Vanthoor through having run off the circuit during a hard-fought defence of third place.

Bortolotti and Vanthoor chipped away at Campbell's five-second lead in the second half of the race, but had to settle for second and third as the Grove Motorsport driver held on to claim Australia's first gold medal. But by finishing second in a Lamborghini, Bortolotti ensured Italy pipped France to top spot in the medals table on silver-medal countback, both nations having finished with three golds apiece.

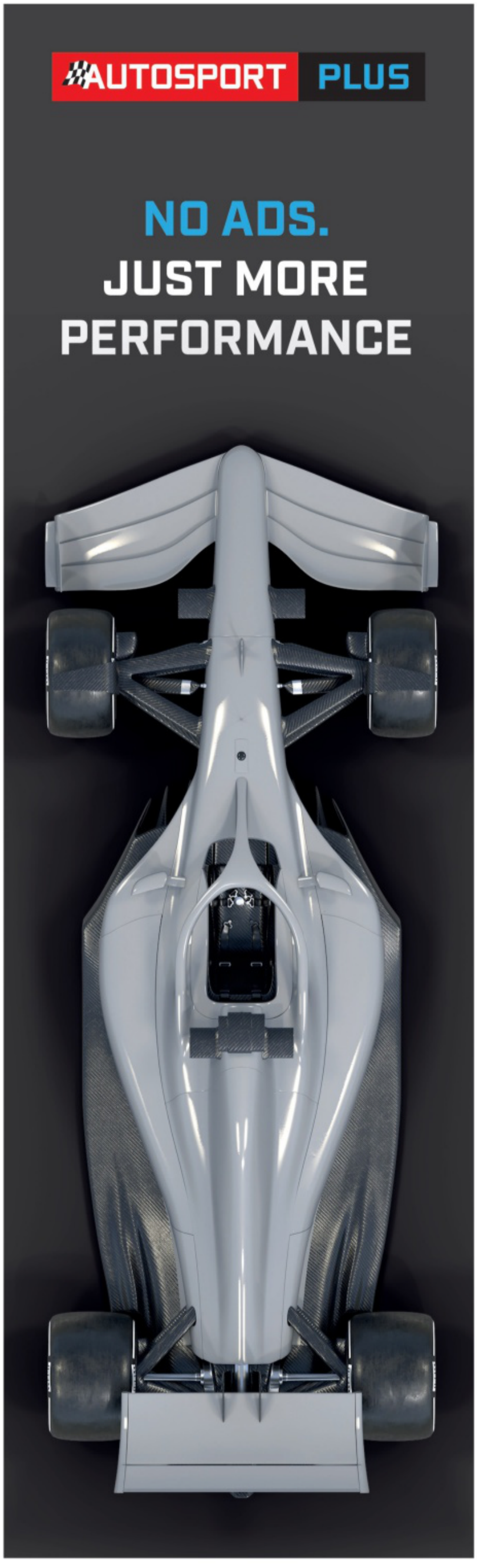
One of the French golds was earned in the GT Cup the day before. Starting with Pro driver Simon Gachet, the home nation built almost a 30s lead in a Mercedes-AMG GT3 before Am pilot Eric Debard took over at the mandatory pitstop. Debard was chased down in the closing stages by Germany's Fabian Schiller, but a thrilling battle was denied as an incident for Chinese Taipei's car caused the race to finish behind the safety car.

Neary joined Loggie at the last minute and scooped a GT Cup bronze

Team United Kingdom scored its first medal in third, despite an early setback. Chris Froggatt withdrew with illness on the eve of practice, so Sam Neary was called up at short notice to partner new British GT champion Ian Loggie, only arriving in time to take part in free practice two and having never driven the circuit before.

Nevertheless, Neary built on a solid opening stint from Loggie to make up two places and secure the bronze despite serving a 5s penalty at the pitstop. "I did a full test day at Donington," revealed Neary. "I drove back home, and at nine o'clock at night I got a phone call asking if I could be in France as soon as possible. I left the house at 10pm to get down to London, a four-hour drive [to catch a flight].

"From where we started the weekend bronze is good. With only two hours of driving around here that's not bad at all."



Coronel wins for Netherlands in Touring Cars amid drama

Veteran Tom Coronel took a controlled victory in the Touring Car race to send the Netherlands home with two gold medals.

After triumphing in the qualifying race, Belgium's Gilles Magnus led the opening lap from pole before his Audi RS3 LMS slowed with a broken driveshaft. That handed the lead to fellow Audi man Coronel, who added to the gold won by his countryman Nathan Ottink in the Cross Car Junior event.

Ireland's Jack Young lost two places on the opening lap, but soon reclaimed third from Argentina's Ignacio Montenegro with a strong move over the kerbs. He then got his elbows out once more to muscle his way past Frenchman Teddy Clairet, who eventually retired.

Young halved a 2.5s deficit to Coronel by the finish in his Honda Civic Type R, but a 5s penalty for the earlier contact with Clairet dropped him to third. Spain's Isidro Callejas Gomez inherited second.

Montenegro was fourth ahead of Latvia's Valters Zviedris, while Sweden's Andreas Backman recovered from a driveshaft failure in the qualifying race to storm from 15th to sixth.

Team UK's Chris Smiley started 10th, having made up five places in the qualifying race. The new TCR UK champion swept around the outside of Australia's Aaron Cameron early on and brought his Honda Civic home in eighth.

Antonelli fights through pain barrier to win F4 gold

Italy's Andrea Kimi Antonelli took a dominant victory in the F4 Cup race at Paul Ricard, despite struggling with a wrist injury.

The Mercedes-AMG F1 junior was the class of a fully subscribed field, with Hitech GP running 24 identical KCMG-built hybrid cars.

Antonelli damaged his left wrist in a late qualifying clash, having already set a time good enough to take pole for the qualifying race. He took a lights-to-flag win in that contest, then the 16-year-old did the same in the main race, pulling clear after an early safety car period to win by 6.902s and earn Italy a third gold medal.

"It was a tough race because I had hurt my wrist," said Antonelli, who took both the Italian and German F4 titles this year. "I had a lot of pain so I had to take some medicine to be able to drive. During the race the first few laps were OK but then the pain was getting worse and I had to manage it a bit."

Austria's Charlie Wurz had looked like being the Italian's closest challenger earlier in the weekend, but a collision

Quattro was unstoppable in Historic Rally group

Italy takes a rally double, with a little help from Audi...

Two crucial golds for Italy came in rallying. The Historic event was dominated by the Italian duo of Andrea Zivian – nicknamed 'Zippo' – and co-driver Nicola Arena, as they grabbed the gold medal with victory on every stage in their mighty four-wheel-drive Audi Quattro.

With 14 stages held across asphalt roads through Marseille, the pair raced into an early lead over the seven stages on Friday to put themselves out of reach, extending that cushion to two minutes and 47 seconds before the top three went into battle for gold at a superspecial stage at Circuit Paul Ricard on Saturday evening.

The Audi pair again proved untouchable, while Team Czech Republic claimed silver with Vojtech Stajf and Vladimir Zelinka in their RWD Opel Kadett. They were consistently best of the rest, narrowly missing out on a heroic stage win on SS8.

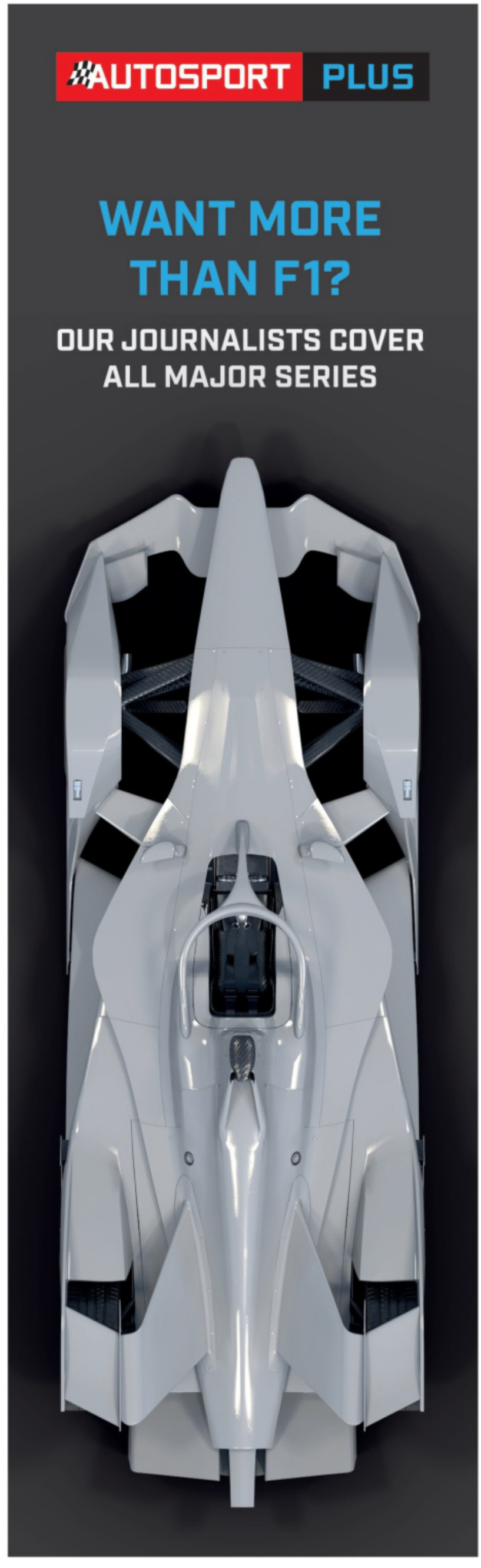
Bronze medal honours were taken by Team Spain with Antonio Sainz and David de la Puente in their Porsche 911SC, beating Team Germany's Siegfried and Renate Mayr's Volvo 244 GL. Team UK's Tim Jones and Steve Jones took fifth in their Chrysler Sunbeam.

Italy's Roberto Dapra had to come from behind to win Rally4 as he beat Spain by just over a second at Paul Ricard in an all-Peugeot 208 battle, while France dominated Rally2 with 13 stage wins from 14 contested.

Rising star Antonelli was supreme in F4

with Germany's Valentin Kluss in the qualifying race left him starting from the back, from where he charged up the order to sixth.

Portugal's Manuel Espirito Santo finished in a lonely second place, while Spain's Bruno Del Pino Ventos resisted late pressure from Danish F4 champion Julius Dinesen to take the bronze.



Baldwin seals maiden gold for UK team in Esports contest

The expectations were high for James Baldwin, who arrived as the pre-event favourite in Esports and Team United Kingdom's best hope of a gold medal. And he delivered emphatically, winning his quarter-final by more than half a minute before passing Brazil's Igor Rodrigues to triumph again in the semi-finals, earning him pole for the final.

The highly successful Esports star and former British GT racer prevailed in a three-wide battle at the rolling start with Chris Harteveld (Netherlands) and Martin Kadlecik (Czech Republic) to lead into Turn 1.

Kadlecik spun after contact with Harteveld, and then was collected by Rodrigues. Harteveld remained on the tail of Baldwin for the first half of the hour-long contest, the front two pulling clear of Spain's Alberto Garcia Gomez and Australia's Philippa Boquida.

Cheered on inside the arena by his UK compatriots from other disciplines, Baldwin edged clear following his mandatory pitstop, eventually prevailing by 2.942s, with Harteveld taking silver. Gomez won the battle for the bronze medal with Boquida by 2s, while Kadlecik recovered from his lap-one spin to finish fifth.

"It was a really hard race because Chris was definitely faster in the first half an hour, so any mistake and he was through," said Baldwin. "In the final 10 minutes I had three track limits warnings, so if I had run wide again I would have got a penalty."

PECKS/SRO

Baldwin coped with the pressure of expectation

Latvia slides to gold as drifting draws crowds

PECKS/SRO

Bluss drifted to Latvia's sole gold

One of the standout features of the Motorsport Games was the diversity of categories competing, with drifting proving popular among the crowds.

Poland's Jakub Przygonski recorded the highest score in the solo qualifying runs in a Toyota GR86, but was eliminated in the semi-finals of the tandems by Kristaps Bluss in a BMW E92 Eurofighter. The Latvian was joined in the final by the spectacular Ali Makhseed, who was representing Kuwait in a Nissan S13.5.

The contest for gold went down to a third and deciding run, with the judges awarding victory the way of Bluss. Przygonski came out on top in the 'small' final to take bronze.

Martin Richards gave hope of a medal for the UK by setting the second-highest score in qualifying in an iconic Nissan Skyline R32, but a mistake in the last-16 round ended his hopes.

"Love it," said Richards during the event. "Just being here, the whole professional vibe of it all and being part of Team UK, it's the Olympics of motorsport. So to represent the UK in drifting is an honour. Just as qualifying started, we saw droves of people walking up and that's really good to see.

"We believe [my Skyline] is the oldest still-competing-at-the-highest-level drift car in the world. Most people start building new cars, when this has been going since 2004, and it's still going strong now. It's a bit like 'Trigger's broom' mind, because the only original thing is probably the roof!"

UK hopes dashed as Belgium scores double-karting triumph

A large field of competitors took part in the maiden karting events at the Motorsport Games, and were watched by the likes of ex-Formula 1 stars Felipe Massa and Jean Alesi.

Brazil's Gabriel Koenigkan led the early stages of the Junior Karting final from Peru's Andres Cardenas before France's Jules Caranta moved past the pair to take the win on the road. But he was denied by a post-race penalty, handing Cardenas and Peru the gold. Koenigkan took the silver and Denmark's Mikkel Gaarde Pedersen the bronze.

The Senior final was disrupted by a chaotic opening lap, in which 11 of the starting 30 drivers crashed out. With leading contenders Nacho Tunon (Spain) and Joel Bergstrom (Sweden) among the retirees having clashed in a battle for second, Belgium's Elie Goldstein took a comfortable victory from pole ahead of Sri Lanka's Yevan David and Israel's Ariel Elkin.

BENICHOU/SRO

Peru took Junior spoils after French penalty

Belgium also won the four-hour Karting Endurance event, finishing one lap clear of Spain in a contest that ended in heartache for the United Kingdom. The Titan Motorsport-run UK squad had looked strong medal contenders with a solid quartet of Jack O'Neil, Mike Philippou, Owen Jenman and Rhianna Kay Purcocks, and led early on. But they were handed a 10s stop/go penalty for their kart not being stationary during a driver change approaching the halfway stage.

Despite recovering to pass Spain for second, they were then further thwarted by an exhaust failure and a seemingly uncompetitive replacement kart, losing third to the Czech Republic inside the final 30 minutes.

MEDAL WINNERS

GT CUP
Gold France
Eric Debard/Simon Gachet
(Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)
Silver Germany
Valentin Pierburg/Fabian Schiller
(Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)
Bronze United Kingdom
Ian Loggie/Sam Neary
(Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)

GT SPRINT
Gold Australia
Matt Campbell
(Porsche 911 GT3-R)
Silver Italy
Mirko Bortolotti
(Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo)
Bronze Belgium
Dries Vanthoor
(Audi R8 LMS Evo II)

TOURING CAR
Gold Netherlands
Tom Coronel
(Audi RS3 LMS)
Silver Spain
Isidro Callejas
(Cupra Leon)
Bronze Ireland
Jack Young
(Honda Civic Type R)

F4
Gold Italy
Andrea Kimi Antonelli
Silver Portugal
Manuel Espirito Santo
Bronze Spain
Bruno Del Pino Ventos

HISTORIC RALLY
Gold Italy
Andrea Zivian/Nicola Arena
(Audi Quattro)
Silver Czech Republic
Vojtech Stajf/Frantisek Rajnoha
(Opel Kadett Coupe)
Bronze Spain
Antonio Sainz/David de la Puente
(Porsche 911SC)

RALLY2
Gold France
Mathieu Arzeno/Romain Roche
(Skoda Fabia)
Silver Spain
Jose Maria Lopez/Borja Rozada
(Hyundai i20)
Bronze Estonia
Georg Linnamae/James Morgan
(VW Polo GTI)

RALLY4
Gold Italy
Roberto Dapra/Luca Guglielmetti
(Peugeot 208)
Silver Turkey
Ali Turkkan/Ahmet Erdener
(Ford Fiesta)
Bronze Spain
Oscar Palomo/Rodrigo Sanjuan
(Peugeot 208)

ESPORTS
Gold United Kingdom
James Baldwin
Silver Netherlands
Chris Harteveld
Bronze Spain
Alberto Garcia Gomez

DRIFTING
Gold Latvia
Kristaps Bluss
(BMW E92 Eurofighter)
Silver Kuwait
Ali Makhseed
(Nissan S13.5)
Bronze Poland
Jakub Przygonski
(Toyota GR86)

KARTING ENDURANCE
Gold Belgium
Silver Spain
Bronze Czech Republic

KARTING JUNIOR
Gold Peru
Andres Cardenas
Silver Brazil
Gabriel Koenigkan
Bronze Denmark
Mikkel Gaarde Pedersen

KARTING SENIOR
Gold Belgium
Elie Goldstein
Silver Sri Lanka
Yevan David
Bronze Israel
Ariel Elkin

AUTO SLALOM
Gold Germany
Claire Schonborn/Marcel Hellberg
Silver Slovakia
David Nemcek/Michaela Dorcik
Bronze Georgia
Mevludi Meladze/Irine Onashvili

KARTING SLALOM
Gold Germany
Sebastian Romberg/Annika Spielberger
Silver Belgium
Romy De Groote/Dario Pemov
Bronze Poland
Emilia Rotko/Karol Krol

CROSS CAR JR
Gold Netherlands
Nathan Ottink
Silver Sweden
Alexander Gustafsson
Bronze Belgium
Romuald Demelenne

CROSS CAR SR
Gold France
David Meat
Silver Spain
Ivan Pina-Chinchilla
Bronze Sweden
Patrick Halberg

BEAUMONT/SRO

FINAL RANKING

		GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
1	**Italy**	3	1	
2	**France**	3		
3	**Belgium**	2	1	2
4	**Germany**	2	1	
=	**Netherlands**	2	1	
5	**United Kingdom**	1		1
6	**Australia**	1		
=	**Latvia**	1		
=	**Peru**	1		
7	**Spain**		4	4
8	**Czech Republic**		1	1
=	**Sweden**		1	1
9	**Brazil**		1	
=	**Kuwait**		1	
=	**Portugal**		1	
=	**Slovakia**		1	
=	**Sri Lanka**		1	
=	**Turkey**		1	
10	**Poland**			2
11	**Denmark**			1
=	**Estonia**			1
=	**Georgia**			1
=	**Ireland**			1
=	**Israel**			1

Team UK celebrates Baldwin's Esports gold
PECKS/SRO

ISHIHARA
motorsport IMAGES

Super Nojiri clinches his second crown

SUPER FORMULA
SUZUKA (JAP)
29-30 OCTOBER
ROUND 7/7

Tomoki Nojiri secured his second Super Formula title at Suzuka as Team Mugen swept the board in the final double-header of the season.

Second place in the opening race on Saturday behind team-mate Ukyo Sasahara was enough for Nojiri to clinch the crown and become the first back-to-back title-winner in Japan's top formula series since Tsugio Matsuda in 2007-08.

The weekend didn't start well for Nojiri as he toiled to the 16th-fastest time in Friday practice, offering his title rivals Sacha Fenestraz and Ryo Hirakawa a glimmer of hope.

But any ambitions of a dramatic turnaround were crushed the following morning in qualifying, as Nojiri blitzed to a fifth pole in nine races while Hirakawa qualified 11th and Fenestraz struggled with tyre-pressure issues to line up 17th.

Come the race, neither Hirakawa (Impul) nor Fenestraz (Kondo Racing) could make serious progress from their grid slots, ending up ninth and 16th respectively.

Sasahara meanwhile was able to take advantage of Nojiri's caution with the title at stake to clinch his second win of 2022.

Having moved up to second early on from fifth on the grid, Sasahara pitted one lap before Nojiri and then had the advantage of warmer tyres when his team-mate emerged from the pits, which allowed him to pounce for the lead at the hairpin.

Red Bull junior Ren Sato (Team Goh) scored his first podium of the year in third to grab the Rookie of the Year prize.

Sunday offered the chance for Nojiri to push with the title no longer at stake. He stormed to a sixth pole of the year and a dominant victory, his first since the season opener at Fuji Speedway in April.

Dandelion Racing's Hiroki Otsu and TOM'S driver Ritomo Miyata completed the podium in what was a straightforward race at the head of the field.

Fenestraz meanwhile got the better of Hirakawa in the battle for fourth to confirm his status as championship runner-up in his final season before his move to Formula E with Nissan.

JAMIE KLEIN

motorsport.tv
Relive this race at Motorsport.tv

Bell chimes in for title chance

NASCAR CUP
MARTINSVILLE (USA)
30 OCTOBER
ROUND 35/36

Christopher Bell scored his second win of the NASCAR Cup playoffs at Martinsville to give himself a shot at his first title.

Bell, who could only advance to the 'Championship 4' next weekend at Phoenix with a win, pitted for new tyres on the final caution and lined up sixth on the restart with 24 of 500 laps remaining.

He then methodically ran down and passed leader Chase Briscoe with four laps to go to reclaim the lead and held off Kyle Larson by 0.869 seconds for the win.

The victory locked Bell in as one of the four drivers who will compete for the 2022 title, the first such opportunity of his career.

But Bell's stunning victory was overshadowed by Ross Chastain's daring video game-like move riding the Turns 3 and 4 wall on the final lap that took him from 10th to fourth at the chequered flag. Chastain's fourth-place finish allowed him to claim the final Championship 4 slot by four points over Denny Hamlin.

Joining Bell and Chastain in competing for the series title at Phoenix are Joey Logano – who was already locked in thanks to his win at Las Vegas – and Chase Elliott, who advanced on points.

Up on the roof: Bell's win means he'll get to fight for the NASCAR Cup title

THACKER/NKP/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

JIM UTTER

Hop it: van Gisbergen cleared off for third title

HORBOROUGH/EDGE motorsport IMAGES

Van Gisbergen doubles up to secure hat-trick

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
SURFERS PARADISE (AUS)
29-30 OCTOBER
ROUND 12/13

Shane van Gisbergen and Triple Eight sealed both Supercars titles on the streets of Surfers Paradise.

Van Gisbergen went into the Gold Coast 500 needing to finish just 24th or better in one race to put a third Supercars crown beyond doubt. But there was nothing conservative about his approach to the penultimate round of the season, van Gisbergen winning both races to secure the drivers' title for himself and the teams' title for Triple Eight.

In Saturday's opener van Gisbergen began by shadowing David Reynolds before executing a race-winning pass on lap 16. From there he charged to a decisive victory ahead of an exhausted Reynolds, who had to battle with a faulty cool suit.

Sunday's race was rocked by a huge pile-up on the fourth lap, triggered by James Golding hitting a tyre bundle and spinning at the beach chicane. The subsequent crash effectively took eight cars out of the race.

Will Davison had grabbed the lead at the start after cutting the first chicane to avoid contact with van Gisbergen. The Kiwi easily cleared Davison after the restart, however, setting up a Gold Coast clean sweep. Chaz Mostert jumped Davison's Ford in the first round of stops to secure a Holden 1-2, while Davison rounded out the podium.

Van Gisbergen's record-breaking season wins tally now stands at 21. The season will conclude in Adelaide on the first weekend of December.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

Kristoffersson takes the fifth with a flourish

WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP
BARCELONA (ESP)
29-30 OCTOBER
ROUND 5/6

Johan Kristoffersson stormed to his fifth World Rallycross title and the first of the new electric-powered era with a dominant display in Spain.

The Swede was a disappointed fifth in the opening round on Saturday after early contact in the final with Kevin Hansen, but made up for it racing in a class of his own all day on Sunday. The Volkswagen driver took the superpole by almost a second, remained unbeaten across the heats, progression race and semi-final, then simply drove away from his competitors in the final to beat Saturday winner Timmy Hansen by five seconds. The victory was also the 34th of his World Rallycross career.

"Today the Volkswagen was flying, and I really enjoyed showing off its pace and potential in the final," said Kristoffersson.

"A fifth world title is just unbelievable, and it will take some time to sink in. It's the first time my girlfriend and son have been here to see me win the championship, and I'm so happy to get to share this special moment with them. It feels amazing."

Timmy Hansen was delighted with victory the day before because it was his first of a largely frustrating season. As his brother and Kristoffersson got together at Turn 1 in the final, he ran second to Niclas Gronholm, took his joker lap early, then pounced for victory on the last lap.

WEEKEND WINNERS

SUPER FORMULA
SUZUKA (JAP)
Race 1 Ukyo Sasahara
Team Mugen
Race 2 Tomoki Nojiri
Team Mugen

NASCAR CUP
MARTINSVILLE (USA)
Christopher Bell
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
SURFERS PARADISE
Race 1 Shane van Gisbergen
Triple Eight (Holden Commodore)
Race 2 Shane van Gisbergen
Triple Eight (Holden Commodore)

WORLD RALLYCROSS
BARCELONA (ESP)
Race 1 Timmy Hansen
Hansen World RX (Peugeot 208)
Race 2 Johan Kristoffersson
Kristoffersson Motorsport (VW Polo)

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FERRARI'S NEW LE MANS ERA

'A tribute to our past and the manifesto for our future'

After 50 years, Ferrari is heading back to Le Mans with its all-new 499P. A nod to tradition was inevitable as the Prancing Horse forges into a new era

GARY WATKINS

The stars have aligned for Ferrari. It is heading back to the very pinnacle of sportscar racing after a 50-year absence in the centenary year of the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2023. Those anniversaries were not lost on the Italian manufacturer when it sat around the table as new rules began to be thrashed out back in the spring of 2018 for what we are now billing as a golden era. But it was the realisation of what was to come — just how big sportscars can become once again — that tipped Ferrari into bringing to an end its long hiatus from the big time in endurance.

"All the numbers have come in a magic moment," says Antonello Coletta, Ferrari's sportscar racing boss and the architect of its return to the prototype ranks as a factory with a hybrid prototype that since its launch at the weekend we are now calling the 499P. "When we made some discussions in the last years, our vision was open, but when we understood that the occasion was great, we took the final decision."

But Ferrari's return to the top of the sportscar tree next year with a two-car attack on the World Endurance Championship is not just about the numbers 50 and 100. It is about some much bigger numbers with many more noughts: the budget involved.

Ferrari's long-awaited comeback owes much to the regulations that it helped write. The Le Mans Hypercar rules to which the 499P has been developed have slashed the cost of entry to Le Mans and the WEC from the LMP1 era. "Now the budget is much less," explains Coletta. "Now it is easier to make the decision to come »

FERRARI

Antonello Coletta is the figure charged to lead Ferrari's return

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back than it would have been in the past with LMP1."

That is why, he continues, "when we started to consider to come back that I fought to reduce the budgets". Ferrari, it should be pointed out, was one of a group of manufacturers that went back to the FIA and WEC promoter and Le Mans organiser the ACO after the original LMH rules had been published in December 2018 arguing that the top class of the series remained too expensive.

A second major component of the LMH rules alongside cost reduction is the allowance for significant styling inputs into what is a pure-bred racing car. They are actually inextricably linked: the relatively low aerodynamic targets laid down in so-called performance windows mean that the shape of the car doesn't have to be solely defined by the windtunnel.

For Coletta and his team at the Attivita Sportive GT department masterminding the LMH project, the 499P is very much a Ferrari. "The styling is very important for us," he says. "We would like that when people see our car, they can recognise a Ferrari. I think we have attained a good result."

The golden era, of course, brings two different types of prototype together, LMHs and LMDhs, the route taken by Ferrari's old sparring partner, Porsche. The Italian manufacturer opted against that direction because, to Coletta's mind, an LMDh wouldn't have been a true Ferrari. The LMDh rules call for a car to be based on the spine of one of the four forthcoming new-generation LMP2 chassis and the use of an off-the-shelf hybrid system.

"We chose LMH because, for Ferrari, it's important to make all the car," he says. "Ferrari is a manufacturer and for us, it's not our philosophy to buy part of the car.

"We can say this car is a tribute to our past and the manifesto for our future. Endurance racing is part of our history and part of our tradition of using this type of competition to test technologies. For this we need to create 100% of the parts.

"It was the combination of many, many factors that gave us the chance to write another chapter," continues Coletta, who is insistent that the Formula 1 cost cap introduced for 2021 was not among them. "We had the vision to come back, but there was not just one point."

Ferrari's last factory prototype, the 312 PB of 1973, is referenced

Heavy on symbolism

The name of the new Ferrari prototype follows a tradition that dates back to the very first Ferrari, the 125S of 1947. The 499 refers to the capacity of a single cylinder in cubic centimetres of its engine. The powerplant in the back of the new LMH is a twin-turbo V6 with a three-litre – believed to be 2992cc, to be exact – capacity. The 125S was a 1.5-litre V12. The P stands for prototype, in case you were wondering.

Who will sit in here? Ferrari has yet to name its WEC driving squad

Number 51 is a more recent tradition thanks to GTE Pro successes

JEP

Collaboration with Centro Stile was key to instil Ferrari character

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The new car was unveiled in a livery that also tipped its hat to the past. The 499P will race in red, of course, but it carries yellow trimming that harks back to the three-litre Group 6 car with which Ferrari competed in the World Championship for Makes in 1972 and 1973. What can be described as the lead car had a stripe in yellow – the colours of Ferrari's hometown of Modena – down the nose and it was this entry that won the Sebring 12 Hours in 1972 with Jacky Ickx and Mario Andretti, helping the marque to the WCM title. Ickx and Brian Redman would win two more races in the 'yellow' entry at Monza and the Nurburgring the following year in what turned out to be the factory's final season of prototype racing before the decision was taken to focus purely on F1.

The 499P present for Saturday's launch at the Imola Finali Mondiali Ferrari, or world finals for its one-make challenge series, carried the race number #50 to mark the gap in years since the 312 PB screamed around Le Mans for the final time. That fits nicely with the number of the second car, #51. The four GTE Pro drivers' titles claimed by Ferrari since the rebirth of the WEC in 2012 have all been taken by the #51 entry fielded by the AF Corse factory team.

The heart of a Ferrari

The beating heart of any Ferrari is its engine. The decision to go for the V6 was made after a number of other concepts were evaluated, according to Ferdinando Cannizzo, head of design and development at Attivita Sportive GT.

"In the very initial phase a V12, a V8, a V6 was considered, everything to be honest," he explains. "When you make a decision you have to understand what you are losing if you go in one direction. Selecting the V6 was definitely the right path to follow considering the way our range of road cars is moving – it was natural to go that route."

The prototype's internal combustion engine is the same capacity and architecture – with the turbos mounted inside a wide-angle 120-degree vee – as the powerplant in the 296 GTB launched last year and therefore that of the GT3 version that comes on stream for next season. Cannizzo explains that "this makes it much easier to have technological feedback into our road cars".

"But it wasn't a compromise because a V6 is small, light and very compact," he continues. "This gives an advantage in packaging, weight distribution and centre of gravity."

Cannizzo stresses that the prototype engine isn't the same as that found in the GT3. He argues that it can't be: "It is not the same engine. It is a stressed engine, which means the structure has to be totally different."

The V6 powers the Ferrari along with a front-axle hybrid system developed like the rest of the car in-house at Attivita Sportive GT. The battery technology, says Cannizzo, represents the biggest cross-over with the Scuderia Ferrari F1 team. It is, says Cannizzo, "basically based on their knowledge".

The timeline

The new V6 race engine was running on the dyno even before the momentous day on 24 February 2021 when Ferrari announced the LMH programme. "We made a bet," says Cannizzo, who really means that he and his team took a gamble that the project was going to be signed off.

Design started on what became the 499P in March 2021, though Cannizzo admits that conceptual work dates all the way back to the spring of 2018 when the roundtable meetings that led into the working groups that created the LMH rulebook began. The first iteration of the 499P was also running in the virtual realm before that February 2021 sign-off.

"We were on the simulator with our concept car already at the end of the 2020," he says. "During the conceptual stage the car was being shaped in the simulator, and then we continued improving the knowledge of the car through the design phase. Now I can say that driving the car on the race track and the simulator is not that much different."

The shape

Ferrari's full computational fluid dynamics resources were utilised in the design, though not the F1 windtunnel. Scale testing was undertaken in an external tunnel that Cannizzo prefers not to mention, before a move to the Sauber facility for full-size testing.

"Most of the job was done in the Sauber tunnel," he explains, which makes sense because it is there that the car will undergo its homologation testing, set for the end of the year, for the WEC. "As soon as possible we moved to the full-scale windtunnel because that is the most representative. We wanted a clear correlation between the design and real performance." »

Ferdinando Cannizzo is the technical chief behind Ferrari's return

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Ferrari 499P made its first public appearance at Imola beside new 296 GT3

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Cannizzo explains that the twin rear wing set-up had "been quite interesting for Centro Stile [Ferrari's styling department] because they could play a little bit with our ideas". The lower element incorporates the rear lights in a single bar running the width of the lower plane: "There was a kind of loop with Centro Stile."

The unusual rear aero package is Ferrari's take on rules that also lay down a strict lateral stability requirement. "The constraints for the aero stability are quite demanding," he says. "We tested several options."

Testing so far

The test mileage completed by the 499P that Ferrari drip fed to the world through the summer looked very encouraging. In early September, it stated that a car that ran for the first time — as is Ferrari tradition — at Fiorano on 6 July had completed 5000km (3000 miles). Now it puts that figure at more than 12,000km. The reason why it has been racking up the kilometres so quickly has now become apparent. It has been testing with two chassis almost from the very beginning of the development programme.

The second car came on stream at the second proper circuit test, which is understood to have been at Mugello sometime in August. The rollout of this car took place — though not at Fiorano — while the first 499P was running at Barcelona on its maiden outing on a race track.

"The reason we arranged the development programme with two cars was to have one focused on performance and one on reliability," explains Cannizzo. "On the one focused on performance we didn't care about reliability. The other one we have is to put mileage on all the parts to understand where are the major issues we have to solve. This was the only chance to cope with the small window we have [for testing]."

Cannizzo doesn't hide the fact that the 499P has encountered problems. "At the very first shakedown of the car we were surprised because we ran three days without problems," he explains. "Then clearly some reliability issues popped up, which is good because it is better to have them sooner rather than later. We were able to react promptly to this."

No news on drivers...

Testing of the 499P has been handled by the eight-strong squad of Ferrari Competizione GT drivers. That means Alessandro Pier Guidi, James Calado, Miguel Molina, Antonio Fuoco, Davide Rigon, Nicklas Nielsen, Daniel Serra and Alessio Rovera have all driven it, along with the ultra-experienced Andrea Bertolini, whose test-driving credentials are well rated throughout Ferrari.

Coletta still isn't being drawn on which six drivers will be racing the two 499Ps when they line up on the grid for the Ferrari AF Corse squad at the Sebring 1000 Miles WEC opener next March. He reiterates his long-held position that they will be exclusively drawn from its existing GT squad. "The choice of drivers will be from the Ferrari family," he says. "We have very consistent drivers in the GT family; 100% the choice will be from inside our house."

...Nor customer cars

Ferrari has a long history of selling race cars to privateers. Don't forget its last Le Mans victory in 1965 was garnered by Luigi Chinetti's North American Racing Team and not the factory. Coletta insists the decision on making the 499P available to customers — and there have already been enquiries — and if it will race in IMSA have yet to be made. "We will have to see," he says on both topics, while insisting that for the moment the focus is the WEC.

When that campaign starts at Sebring in March, Ferrari admits that the pressure will be on.

"We enter this challenge with humility," says Ferrari executive chairman John Elkann, "but conscious of a history that has taken us to over 20 world endurance titles and nine overall victories at the Le Mans 24 Hours."

SEASON REVIEW

INGRAM EMERGES INTO THE LIGHT

He'd come so close so many times, and finally Tom Ingram became BTCC champion with the Excelr8 Hyundai team in 2022. Here's how he did it

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP motorsport IMAGES

"I went to the accountant, and everyone who was working at their desks stood up and applauded me as I walked through the door! Weird stuff like that. You don't realise what a big deal it is, but it took two hours on the Monday to reply to all the messages. You're just in your own little bubble, cracking on, and then you realise there's a lot of people watching it."

This isn't 2022 British Touring Car champion Tom Ingram talking. Instead, it's his engineer Spencer Aldridge. You see, the top end of the BTCC is all about such driver/technician double-acts, such as we continue to see with Ingram's title-winning predecessor Ash Sutton with Antonio Carrozza. They're like Brian Clough and Peter Taylor, Saint and Greavsie, Simon and Garfunkel, or even Morecambe and Wise. Could one do it without the other? Possibly. But maybe the magic wouldn't be quite there.

To recap, the Ingram-and-Aldridge partnership grew up at Speedworks Motorsport, before commercial reasons owing to that squad's increased branding from Toyota for 2021 forced a driver who had become known as the BTCC's 'nearly man' to jump ship. He found a home at Excelr8 Motorsport, and here Aldridge joined him. "That was a really difficult decision to make," reflects Aldridge of his departure. "I'd been working with Christian [Dick, Speedworks boss] and his dad at his dad's garage since I was 16, just at nights and weekends while I was at school. But the relationship you've got with a driver is so difficult to build, and to sacrifice it seemed like the wrong thing to do."

At the beginning of last year, the pair 'inherited' a Hyundai i30 N Fastback project that had shown only flashes of promise in 2020, but improved it to the extent that Ingram placed fourth ('nearly man' again) in the 2021 standings, with three race wins. And then the toil started again... For 2022, along came hybrid with all that weight to accommodate. And, simultaneously, Excelr8 had commissioned Swindon Powertrain, which had lost the customer TOCA engine deal to M-Sport, to build bespoke Hyundai powerplants.

In the words of driver and engineer, a test carried out at Snetterton after the end of the 2021 season was key to this year's success. "I was part of the design team on the initial hybrid car for Speedworks before I left," says Aldridge, referring to the test Toyota run by hybrid supplier Cosworth as a laboratory project. "We'd sketched out the plumbing and built the test car with the schematic of how the plumbing was going to work, and where the radiators were going to be positioned and all that kind of thing." And now, with the Hyundai, "we kind of hit the ground running with that because we could plan it before we had any components. We 3D printed all the bits we needed to fit — the radiators, the motor, we mocked up a battery — just to do our planning side of it, so all that could be made a lot earlier than everyone else I think, because we didn't have to wait for the actual parts to arrive with us. We could get cracking. In that test we moved weight around to simulate the battery position to the extremes of where we were allowed. We got the balance working quite well with that weight."

The 'dummy' hybrid box was the ballast carried on so many occasions in the pre-hybrid era. "We had to adjust the height, because the mass of the battery is higher than the ballast box," explains Aldridge. "You can do all the maths and calculations that you want, but with it being a front-wheel-drive touring car sometimes the maths don't work quite as they would if it was a GT3 car or a single-seater. Sometimes you need quirky weird things to make these front-wheel-drive cars work. It's not conventional."

When Swindon's Hyundai engine made its test debut, Ingram found it very little different to the company's TOCA unit he had raced since 2014. And that was a good thing — it had powered Sutton to the 2020 and 2021 titles, after all. Ingram carried that package into a title battle against Sutton — now with the Motorbase Performance Ford Focus squad — and West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport racers Jake Hill and Colin Turkington, once Josh Cook and the BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R had fallen out of the picture. And, while the last-named bemoaned his own lack of straightline speed, »

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Ingram was only threat to BMW men Hill and Turkington at baking Snetterton

the others made much of the poke of the Hyundai, especially at the Brands Hatch finale. But such things are never as simple as that, and it's the Fastback shape of the Hyundai that played a huge part.

"Yes, the engine has been strong, but I don't think that's necessarily the thing that's won us the championship by any means," declares Ingram. "There's a lot of other stuff that's had to play in. The shape of the car does play a massive variation to it."

"Excelr8 had obviously chosen that i30 N Fastback platform before we arrived exactly for those reasons — for the shape, the fact it's almost like a mini-saloon, it's got quite a sloped rear screen," adds Aldridge. "And all the teams and engineers can see the windtunnel data — they know it's a low-drag car so no one should be surprised it's fast at the end of the straight. It was in 2020 and it was in 2021 as well. I think it's only the 3 Series BMW that's equal or slightly better in road trim. In terms of drag coefficient it's quite a bit better than any of the hatchbacks. In cornering performance and handling, we've tweaked away at that and improved it massively as well. We've got the chassis working quite well, the engine has obviously given us the consistent performance, and that low-drag platform means the whole package is very competitive."

The result was a car that was stunning at Oulton Park and Brands Hatch GP, two circuits that reward a great chassis and a top driver, and scene of Ingram's two pole positions plus four of his six wins this season. "It was absolutely sublime," enthuses Ingram. "At Brands Hatch especially because it was just unbelievable. In the years that I've been racing, it's probably only once that I'd gone, 'That is just the dog's bollocks', when you get out of it and go, 'There is nothing more I want from that, that is perfect'. Granted, it wasn't quite as good at Oulton as it was as Brands because we refined it more, but to have had two commanding poles this year is fantastic, and they're circuits that are chassis performance. Oulton was great, because it has been rubbish for me in the past, so to come out of it with a pole and double win was, 'This is pretty good, this is'.

Late-season form man Butcher beat Shedden to honour of top Scot

ROUND BY ROUND

Donington Park
R1 Tom Ingram
R2 Gordon Shedden
R3 Jake Hill

Hill grabs pole on BMW debut, but early scrap with Turkington allows Ingram through to beat Turkington. Hill recovers to third, but excluded for failing rideheight test, promoting Shedden. Turkington stalls in race two, and Shedden passes Ingram for win, with Gamble third. Hill fights up to ninth, draws reversed-grid pole, and then sails away to beat Sutton and Cook.

Brands Hatch Indy
R1 Josh Cook
R2 Josh Cook
R3 Colin Turkington

BMWs dominate qualifying, where Turkington is supreme. But rain on race day plays into Cook's hands. He storms from fifth on grid to win opener. Hill tries a late attack, but slides wide and it's Ingram second from Cammish. Defence maestro Cook then doubles up. Hill spins out of second, to the benefit of Cammish and Butcher. Turkington beats Hill and Thompson in finale.

Thruxton
R1 Josh Cook
R2 Josh Cook
R3 Adam Morgan

Cook puts his Honda on pole. Hill jumps ahead at start of race one, but Cook gets him at the Complex. Sutton is third. It's a similar story in race two, but this time Cook's move around Hill at the chicane is stunning. Hill chases but hybrid doesn't work. Morgan beats Turkington in final race of the day, and Sutton chases them to complete a hat-trick of thirds on the day.

Oulton Park
R1 Tom Ingram
R2 Tom Ingram
R3 Stephen Jelley

Ingram's Hyundai is spot-on, and he takes pole and wins the first two races. Butcher chases in race one, but Sutton and Shedden get past late on, before Shedden is penalised for incident with Morgan. Sutton is second again in race two, and Turkington passes Butcher for third. Massive Lloyd/Turkington shunt mars race three, won by Jelley from Moffat and Cook.

Croft
R1 Dan Lloyd
R2 Dan Lloyd
R3 Gordon Shedden

Lloyd emerges from hospital to star in his rebuilt Excelr8 Hyundai. He charges past Rowbottom and poleman Turkington to beat the BMW and Honda and win the opener. Ingram repeats that feat in race two to complete a Hyundai 1-2, with Turkington next. After a DNF with damage in race one, Shedden gets reversed-grid pole and wins, while Cook holds off Butcher for second.

Joy for engineer Aldridge as his man claims crown

"GRINDING THROUGH WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WIN, SCORING POINTS – THAT'S BIG"

Another hugely important weekend was at Snetterton. BMW men Turkington and Hill dominated in the baking heat, while Sutton won the reversed-grid race, but Ingram was the only realistic front-wheel-drive challenger to the rear-wheel-drive machines.

"Those weekends are really important, because although there's not a lot of glory in the sense that you're not winning races, actually it's the grind of it that has pulled you through," he says. "We had an engine let go in qualifying on Saturday, so we had to do a full change. The guys and girls didn't leave until about two o'clock in the morning, so in that regard it was a tough weekend and actually very rewarding. No massive glory – it was three thirds, just bloody consistent. That a lot of the time is what gets it for you, just grinding through a weekend when you know you're not necessarily going to win it, scoring big points – that's big value."

On the other hand, both Thruxton weekends were a letdown. In the first, he went off early in race one avoiding a Dan Cammish/Dan Rowbottom collision and had to pit to have grass removed from the radiator. The second? Just a tough weekend. But at each, the points he scored are more than the margin by which he won the title... »

HYBRID CUTS RANDOM FACTOR

The arrival of hybrid in the British Touring Car Championship for 2022 may have resulted in grumbling from those who couldn't get it to work consistently, but the side-effect of hybrid-use restrictions replacing the old system of success ballast was a definite winner. Time and again, we saw the top drivers battling it out on track, and that's exactly as it should be.

"I remember the 2018 season," says Tom Ingram. "Colin [Turkington] and I were going for the championship, but I don't think we raced wheel to wheel all year. You end up yo-yoing, you end up being ships in the night. You'd see each other very rarely and then in race three it would be, 'Hi there'. But this year, most weekends, the top four of us have at some point had to overtake each other, and that adds to the racing, because you want to see your championship rivals.

"That finale weekend, Jake [Hill] and I were next to each other all day. We went into the final race of the season starting next to each other – that's perfect, what more could you ask for? You don't want us separated. At the season finale in 2018 I qualified 19th – that's just ridiculous, and Colin was 17th. It just adds too much drama, so with hybrid it's been loads better; it's meant that the four of us – five of us if you include Josh [Cook] – have been racing against each other all year. The fans want the Manchester City-United derbies, the Max Verstappen-v-Lewis Hamiltons, all those at the front fighting against each other."

"For us it was a plug-and-play system," says Ingram's engineer Spencer Aldridge. "We've had the odd little niggle and issue, as everyone has, but you've got to expect that with new technology. We have this cycle every five to six years – we went to the NGTC spec, then we went from GPRM to RML [subframes], then we went to hybrid. It's normal. We have had issues but nothing that's cost us massive points."

Ingram and Hill: never far apart at Brands finale

Knockhill
R1 Jake Hill
R2 Ash Sutton
R3 George Gamble

Scintillating racing between Hill and Sutton is a highlight of the season. Their duel in race one ends in poleman Hill's favour, with Turkington playing it safe in third. Mysterious shifting tyre stack at chicane catches out Hill in race two, releasing Sutton for his first Ford win. Misfiring Hill catches him, with Turkington third again. Rookie Gamble scores maiden victory in finale from Hill and Butcher.

Snetterton
R1 Colin Turkington
R2 Colin Turkington
R3 Ash Sutton

BMWs are a cut above in heatwave and Turkington is brilliant to take pole with no hybrid allowed. He fends off Hill in race one, with Ingram a dogged third. Ingram bump-drafts Turkington into lead of race two after side-by-side action with Hill, who again completes a BMW 1-2. Sutton recovers from drama to win race three from veteran Plato, with Ingram next after Collard penalty.

Thruxton
R1 Dan Cammish
R2 Ash Sutton
R3 Josh Cook

Cammish is on form to take pole, and is gifted big lead in opener by Cook/Sutton shenanigans at Complex on lap one. Shedden emerges in second and holds off Sutton. Sutton gets ahead of the Honda in race two and then sister Ford of Cammish moves over late on to allow him to win. Superb Cook recovers from first-race woe to pass BMWs of Turkington and then Jelley to win finale.

Silverstone
R1 Rory Butcher
R2 Jake Hill
R3 Tom Ingram

Toyota works a treat on National circuit – again – and Butcher is supreme. Hill challenges but also has to fend off Morgan for second. Opportunist Shedden grabs second early in race two, but Hill grasscuts back ahead, and pulls off terrific move on Butcher for victory from the two Scots. First-lap Morgan/Cook/Cammish dramas allow Ingram race three win from Sutton and Butcher.

Brands Hatch GP
R1 Tom Ingram
R2 Tom Ingram
R3 Dan Lloyd

Ingram arrives in Kent third in points, but maximises perfect Hyundai to secure the title. From a dominant pole, he beats Butcher in race one. Sutton clings onto third with damaged turbo but Hill displaces him late on. Hill gets past Butcher in race two and Ingram has to defend to victory, with Turkington third. Lloyd beats Cook and Butcher in finale; Sutton's fourth is not enough.

"That second Thruxton, we picked up an engine issue in qualifying, so we had to go back to the spare, and we were also nursing an issue in that one as well," recalls Ingram. "Naturally the issue with doing your own engine project is that it's bits and pieces that you learn over the course of the year, and the spare engine that we had at Thruxton was the one that had let go in qualifying at Snetterton. So we were on tenterhooks all the way through the day, going, 'This could be the championship unravelling, there's so much that we have no control over'. It was just a nerve-wracking day. We then ended up with a gearbox issue in race three. But that day – nothing spectacular, nothing to shout about, just a consistently OK day. I remember Andrew Jordan saying at the end of 2013 that maybe it was the bad weekends that won the title for him, and not necessarily the good weekends. I think it rings true in that regard.

Sutton leads Hill at Knockhill, in the best race of the season

"I WATCHED IT BACK RECENTLY, AND I WAS STILL JUST AS PISSED OFF AS I WAS AT THE TIME"

Maybe we won the championship at Thruxton, because that was going to be our worst day and actually we did all right."

The remaining two victories came in the very first race of the season at Donington, and towards the end of the year at Silverstone in the reversed-grid finale. The former, it seems, set the tone for 2022: "That was it! Colin, Jake, myself, Ash, all going wheel to wheel on the opening lap of the opening race of the year."

Silverstone's success, on the other hand, came after incidents earlier in the day with Hill and Sutton in which, in each case, the aggressor immediately gave back his ill-gotten gains: "I think a lot of that has come from we've all raced against each other for years. Jake and I have had our incidents over the years, we've fallen out, Ash and I have fallen out, but as you grow older and you get more experience you just learn to understand your battles, and sometimes they're faster, sometimes I'm faster, sometimes I can't get past, sometimes I can get past, but you know that it's going to come back around at the next one. So all that happens is by me firing off Jake, I know he's just going to come back twice as hard at the next one. What's the point? You just understand that these tit-for-tat things end up causing chaos, so you just have a bit of respect. We've all got respect for each other now, which is nice to see."

Perhaps Ingram's biggest mistake of the season was an ill-advised lunge at Knockhill on home hero Gordon Shedden, who you could say is one of the last bastions of a bygone era of elbows-out racing. "I watched it back recently, and I was still just as pissed off as I was at the time," he grumbles. "I had to go for the move, I just wasn't left the space to complete the move, so I think in realistic terms I'd try the same move again on somebody else, and get through fine. I think it's just the fact that it was Gordon and he was putting up a bit of a stern defence that it was a little bit difficult. But that's the sort of stuff you learn – you pick your battles. But at the same time I'm a racing driver and I want to go for gaps."

In the meantime, preparations are ongoing for 2023. "For the races that were fantastic – Oulton and Brands GP – there's another eight circuits there that we can do even better at," asserts Ingram. "By no means have we extracted the absolute most out of this car and I still think there's more to come." "Tom's a class act," adds Aldridge. "He comes to my house and we sit there for a day and go through every piece of video and data that's ever been recorded from a particular circuit, so we turn up with the car in the right window." Such is the closeness of double-acts, and how BTCC titles are won.

P50 TOCA SUPPORTS REVIEW

Cook led points, but challenge faded over year

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR
1	**Tom Ingram** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N Fastback
2	**Ash Sutton** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST
3	**Jake Hill** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport
4	**Colin Turkington** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport
5	**Rory Butcher** (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport
6	**Josh Cook** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R
7	**Gordon Shedden** (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R
8	**Dan Cammish** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST
9	**Adam Morgan** (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / BMW 330e M Sport
10	**Dan Lloyd** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N Fastback

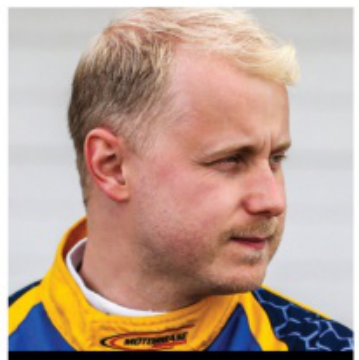
11 **Stephen Jelley** (West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport) 181; 12 **Dan Rowbottom** (Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R) 151; 13 **George Gamble** (Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330e M Sport) 123; 14 **Bobby Thompson** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 99; 15 **Tom Chilton** (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback) 83; 16 **Ricky Collard** (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla GR Sport) 81; 17 **Jason Plato** (BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R) 77; 18 **Aiden Moffat** (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) 69; 19 **Ash Hand** (Power Maxed Racing

POWERED BY motorsport STATS

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS

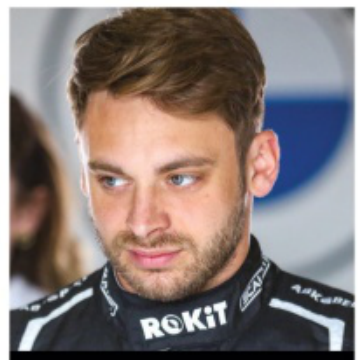
TOM INGRAM

1 Everything he'd learned over all those years of being the BTCC's 'nearly man' finally paid off. Had a superb car in the Excelr8 Hyundai and put together a consummate campaign, with almost no points-costing mistakes. Deserving champ.



ASH SUTTON

2 His move to the Motorbase Ford squad was headline news over the winter. The Focus was far from the greatest car, but he absolutely wrung everything out of it time and again. Arguably the best, but what did Ingram have in reserve?

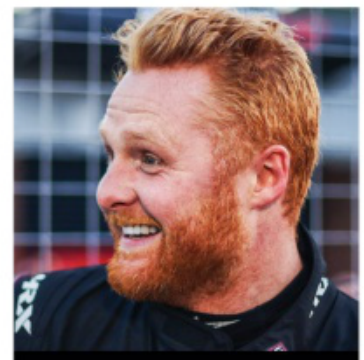


JAKE HILL

3 Finally became a grandee of the BTCC in his first season with the West Surrey BMW operation. Tenacious racer who arguably was better than Turkington at coping when conditions didn't suit the car – a legacy of his experience in historics.

COLIN TURKINGTON

4 When the WSR BMW is on song, there is nothing to compare with a qualifying or race performance from this classy four-time champion. The elegance remains, but was outscored by team newcomer Hill, albeit suffered bad luck late on.



JOSH COOK

5 You could make a strong case for putting him higher up, but the BTC Honda's lack of straightline speed meant that he was only really in the mix at three events. Therefore, it's almost impossible to gauge his 2022 season against the top four.

RORY BUTCHER

6 For the first time stayed in the same car from one season to the next – typical that this came with the arrival of hybrid and all the big changes that entailed… Once that Speedworks Toyota was working, he was mighty and very consistent.

GORDON SHEDDEN

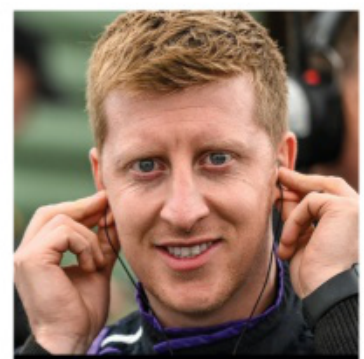
7 He's still got it, as evidenced at Donington and Thruxton. But the Dynamics Honda, once the gold standard of front-wheel-drive NGTC cars, is now second best to the Hyundai. Team also suffered more than most with hybrid problems.

DAN CAMMISH

8 Should have got closer to equalling Sutton on his BTCC comeback in the Motorbase Ford, but fire at opening round set the tone for a disastrous start. Showed mettle in bouncing back and was absolutely on fire (sorry Dan…) at second Thruxton.

DAN LLOYD

9 Probably the most inconsistent form of this top 10, but it was far from rosy off track with his financial struggles after his Oulton shunt. Edges Morgan because he was totally invincible at Croft to take two wins in the Excelr8 Hyundai.



ADAM MORGAN

10 This was family team Ciceley's second year with the BMW, and the amiable Lancastrian took a big step forward to often get in among – or close to – the WSR boys. Outrageous slew of electronics and hybrid woes cost a stack of points.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	PTS
1	2	5	2	5	4	21	8	6	**1**	**1**	17	4	2	7	6	4	12	3	3	3	9	6	7	5	5	**1**	**1**	**1**	5	**394**
4	6	2	9	4	6	3	3	3	2	2	16	6	6	R	2	**1**	5	9	9	**1**	3	**1**	5	6	4	2	4	5	4	**382**
EX	9	**1**	4	7	2	2	2	21	13	7	13	5	4	5	**1**	2	2	2	2	5	4	4	12	2	**1**	4	3	2	7	**381**
2	14	8	5	10	**1**	4	4	2	4	3	R	2	3	6	3	3	4	**1**	**1**	6	10	10	2	R	13	12	5	3	12	**348**
R	10	7	7	3	5	11	13	10	3	4	5	7	7	3	8	6	3	15	12	7	6	5	4	**1**	2	3	2	4	3	**318**
8	5	3	**1**	**1**	8	**1**	**1**	5	8	9	3	15	11	2	15	13	8	19	15	11	13	8	**1**	13	8	6	11	7	2	**296**
3	**1**	9	8	6	11	24	11	R	6	5	4	R	12	**1**	7	5	6	10	R	15	2	3	9	4	3	8	R	19	13	**248**
16	21	13	3	2	10	25	18	20	5	6	6	13	13	8	9	9	R	7	18	16	**1**	2	10	7	7	5	9	8	8	**207**
5	4	6	6	NS	14	7	6	**1**	R	16	8	19	15	10	14	18	11	4	4	8	12	14	R	3	6	R	6	6	R	**193**
11	8	4	15	8	9	8	9	7	7	8	R	**1**	**1**	11	19	22	18	12	11	12	17	13	11	12	15	11	13	10	**1**	**192**

Vauxhall Astra) 55; 20 **Michael Crees** (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) 50; 21 **Aron Taylor-Smith** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 38; 22 **Ollie Jackson** (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST) 33; 23 **Dexter Patterson** (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) 5; 24 **James Gornall** (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback) 2; 25 **Sam Osborne** (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus ST) 1; 26 **Jack Butel** (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback) 1; 27 **Jade Edwards** (BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R) 1; 28 **Tom Oliphant** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 0; 29 **Will Powell** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 0; 30 **Nicolas Hamilton** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 0; 31 **Carl Boardley** (Team Hard Cupra Leon) 0; 32 **Rick Parfitt** (Team Hard Infiniti Q50) 0.

MANUFACTURERS **1 BMW 798**; 2 **Ford** 717; 3 **Hyundai** 644; 4 **Honda** 543; 5 **Toyota** 483.

INDEPENDENT DRIVERS **1 Cook 502**; 2 **Morgan** 400; 3 **Thompson** 354; 4 **Gamble** 335; 5 **Plato** 302; 6 **Moffat** 283; 7 **Taylor-Smith** 265; 8 **Crees** 253; 9 **Hand** 247; 10 **Edwards** 182.

GINETTA JUNIOR
JOSH ROWLEDGE

BRITISH FORMULA 4
ALEX DUNNE

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB
KIERN JEWISS

SEASON REVIEW

THE FANTASTIC FIVE OF THE BTCC SUPPORTS

A quintet of drivers emerged as dominant champions this year, but there was still plenty of drama and excitement along the way

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY **JEP** motorsport IMAGES

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP
JAMES KELLETT

MINI CHALLENGE
SAM WELLER

MINI CHALLENGE

Last year, it was a nail-bitingly dramatic conclusion to the Mini Challenge season, but there was no such tension this time around as the remarkable consistency of Sam Weller meant the Hybrid Tune driver netted the crown with two races to spare.

Considering the reliability woes of some of his rivals – including last year's victor Dan Zelos – and the high chance of contact with the packed field nearing 30 cars, it was impressive of Weller to not just be one of only two drivers to finish all 20 races, but to also always be inside the top six.

With such an emphatic display, it is easy to forget this was just Weller's second full season in the JCW class – and he had yet to win prior to this year. "My strength this year was knowing when to pick your moment," Weller says. "Last season we were good but we just got involved in some skirmishes which could've been avoided."

Weller ended his win drought with a double at the Donington Park opener (above), attributing his early season success to the preparation he and the team had undertaken to get to grips with the new Goodyear tyre for this year. "The first win was very special because that was my first win in that car," Weller adds. "I was second quite a few times the season before. That ate me up over the winter quite badly thinking, 'What have I got to do to get a win in this series?' That was a box ticked and some pressure off."

STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	**Sam Weller**	797
2	**Alex Denning (left)**	747
3	**Jack Mitchell**	728
4	**Ronan Pearson**	704
5	**Jason Lockwood**	694
6	**Jack Davidson**	543

But, while Weller headed the standings from that first race, it could have been very different if the season had instead started at Snetterton in August. Graves Motorsport's Alex Denning won six of the last nine races, the Irish Fiesta graduate really gelling with the JCW and marking himself as a star of the future. But it all came too late to stop Weller.

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Dominant. There is no other way to describe Alex Dunne's performances in British Formula 4 this year as he achieved results not even current/future F1 drivers Lando Norris or Oscar Piastri were able to register in the series. Having won twice and stormed from ninth to second in the partially reversed-grid race at the Donington Park opener, seemingly the only question was whether Dunne would wrap up the first title in the series' new era in time to also contest the Italian round at Monza on the weekend of the Brands Hatch finale.

STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	**Alex Dunne**	412
2	**Oliver Gray (left)**	343
3	**Ugo Ugochukwu**	290
4	**Louis Sharp**	272
5	**Joseph Loake**	271
6	**Aiden Neate**	234

The answer was sort of. Although Dunne had not officially clinched the crown with an event to spare, Oliver Gray needed the most incredible weekend in F4 history to dethrone Dunne and the Irishman therefore still headed to Italy. Yes, there had been a few blips along the way, including scrappy races at Brands Indy and Knockhill, plus engine woes at Croft, but the Hitech GP driver's glory never really looked in doubt as he smashed the series' record for the most wins in a season with 11.

"Breaking the record for most wins against some of the names that have been through the championship is really special to me," says Dunne. "I'm slightly overwhelmed and super-happy with what we've achieved this year."

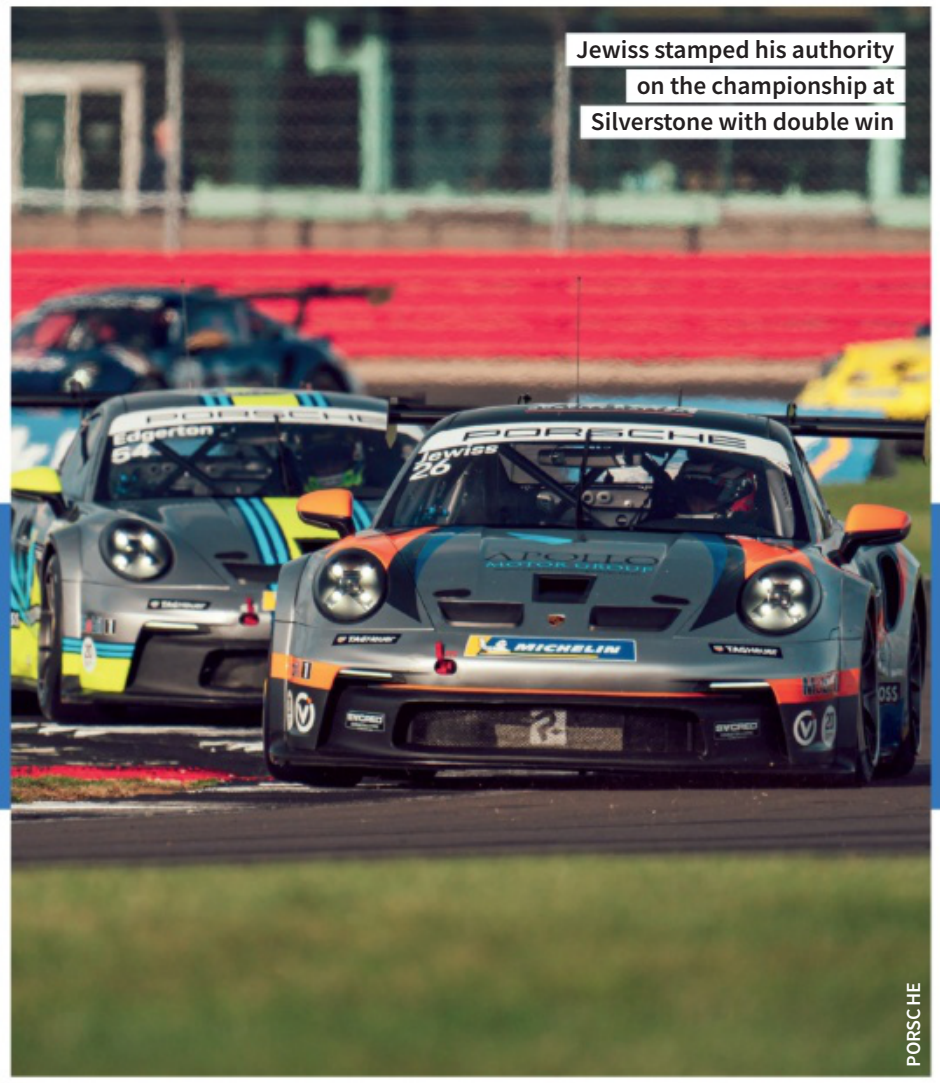
Of all his successes, Dunne picks race three at Snetterton as his favourite. "That was the only race this year I managed to win by 10 seconds and I had the fastest lap by seven tenths as well," he says. "That was a pretty special race and that weekend was purely dominance."

While Carlin's Williams junior Gray grew stronger as the season wore on, he ultimately won just twice and was far too inconsistent to challenge Dunne – a common theme across the grid. The fact fifth-placed Joseph Loake (JHR) was the only other driver to manage at least four wins says it all.

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

The low-scoring nature of the Porsche Carrera Cup GB points system helps create close title battles. And that was how this year's fight was shaping up with five points separating the top four drivers after three events. It continued to be the case with two weekends to go as two points split Kiern Jewiss and Will Martin. Yet the final standings were anything but close as two near-perfect rounds for Jewiss and misery for Martin left a very different impression.

Jewiss had enjoyed contrasting fortunes throughout the campaign, not least a tricky Donington Park opener when contact with Gus Burton left the Team Parker driver out of the points. But he instantly put that behind him with a storming drive from 14th to third in race two. "You want to hit the ground running and to end up in the gravel is never ideal," he reflects. "In race two, we rescued that as best we could and that got the ball rolling."



Jewiss stamped his authority on the championship at Silverstone with double win

PORSCHE

"I THINK I GOT A BIT TOO CONFIDENT AFTER SNETTERTON AND FELT I HAD ENOUGH SPEED"

From there, he scored a win and a podium at Brands Hatch to claw the deficit back and a strong Snetterton weekend put him in a healthy position. But two fifth places at Thruxton then enabled Martin to close right in again. "I think I got a bit too confident after Snetterton and felt I had enough speed to just keep finishing races and it would be OK," admits Jewiss.

That prompted a change in approach for Silverstone and the work behind the scenes paid off with two crushing wins, before he also doubled up at Brands (but was behind Pro-Am champion Charles Rainford in the finale).

As Jewiss hit form at a crucial time, Martin was literally hit. Contact from Theo Edgerton sent Adam Smalley clattering into him at Becketts in race two at Silverstone, leaving him seventh in class, before Edgerton then sent Martin spearing heavily into the barriers exiting Paddock Hill Bend at Brands. All of which meant Martin went from challenging Jewiss to third in the final table.

"Going into the [Brands] weekend [22 points adrift], I was thinking whatever happens, it's been a strong year for us and we've proven we can fight for a championship," says Martin, with there still being plenty of positives for the Richardson Racing driver despite the disappointing conclusion. »

PORSCHE

STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Kiern Jewiss	141
2	Adam Smalley	103
3	Will Martin (left)	97
4	Gus Burton	87
5	Theo Edgerton	69
6	Matty Graham	62

Dunne was only momentarily threatened at the start in dominant Snetterton display

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	James Kellett	610
2	Tom Emson (left)	531
3	Aston Millar	455
4	Henry Dawes	325
5	Reece Somerfield	220
6	Josh Rattican	90

Bold dive around the outside at Paddock Hill Bend set the tone for Kellett's season

The new G56s sounded great but it was disappointing there were not more of the V8 monsters on the Ginetta GT4 Supercup grid this year – with there being just three or four in the top Pro class at times. Those low numbers contributed to the decision to make 2022 the category's final season, but we were treated to a masterclass from James Kellett as he became the last champion in style.

Kellett – a two-time GT5 Challenge title winner – had impressed on two cameo outings in a G55 at the end of last year and the Century Motorsport racer was confident coming into the season. And he was right to be. "I think the package we had was just unbeatable," says Kellett. "We went to the first round and qualified on pole by quite a chunk and that was on the Indy circuit at Brands! At that point, I knew this is my championship to win."

The "chunk" Kellett refers to was a healthy 0.36 seconds around the short 1.2-mile lap and he converted that into two comfortable wins. He then laid down another marker with a victory in the wet reversed-grid finale, storming around the outside of two cars at Paddock and grabbing the lead on lap four.

Kellett never looked back from there, going on to dismantle just about every series record. He won the first seven races, a new record. He claimed 13 wins across the season, another record. And he even triumphed from the back of the grid in the third race at Silverstone after earlier mechanical woe cost him the chance to seal the title with an event to spare. "We worked hard for those wins – it may have looked easy, but it wasn't," Kellett adds. "All that pre-season effort behind the scenes with the team and mechanics [paid off]."

While Kellett was all-conquering to start with, Elite's Tom Emson grew in confidence after his first success at Snetterton. But he was the only driver able to take the fight to Kellett in a thin field – although Kellett believes that made it harder to win the title, given just finishing a race netted a huge points haul.

Nevertheless, Kellett concludes: "It was a year I will remember for the rest of my life." Some of his bold overtakes will certainly live long in the memory as the GT4 Supercup fades into history.

"WE WORKED HARD FOR THOSE WINS – IT MAY HAVE LOOKED EASY, BUT IT WASN'T"

GINETTA JUNIOR

Facing backwards on the approach to the Complex at Thruxton having been spun by a rival is normally the end of a driver's victory hopes. Not for Ginetta Junior champion Josh Rowledge with this moment in the third race at the Hampshire speedbowl, when he fought back to win, encapsulating the tenacity he showed across the campaign.

Whenever he faced a setback, he never let it faze him. Whether that was a disappointing qualifying – on seven occasions he was outside the top six with the new high-pressure format restricting the teenagers to just three laps to register two grid-setting times – or contact that dropped him down the order, Rowledge always seemed to find a way to bounce back.

Rowledge impressively fought back from this Thruxton spin to win

It was just one factor that helped Rowledge take the glory. Another was the confidence winning last year's Winter Series brought after a distinctly average rookie season in the main series, while his consistency – his only time outside the top six was when he spun out at Croft – also helped. "I feel like I've had a strong group of people around me and that's made a difference," Rowledge adds, in reference to the R Racing crew that also powered Aston Millar to last year's crown.

STANDINGS

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Josh Rowledge	652
2	Will Macintyre	611
3	Liam McNeilly	514
4	Harri Reynolds	443
5	Joe Warhurst	427
6	Aqil Alibhai	399

For the first four events, it looked like an intriguing title battle would be in store with Rowledge, Elite Motorsport rookie Will Macintyre and Assetto Motorsport's Harri Reynolds evenly-matched. But a nightmare Knockhill round for Reynolds dropped him back and some poor races for Macintyre in the middle of the year dented his charge. Meanwhile, 2021 runner-up Liam McNeilly did not triumph until the Brands Hatch finale in a disappointing campaign having failed to get to grips with the new qualifying format and being unable to fightback in the impressive manner Rowledge could.

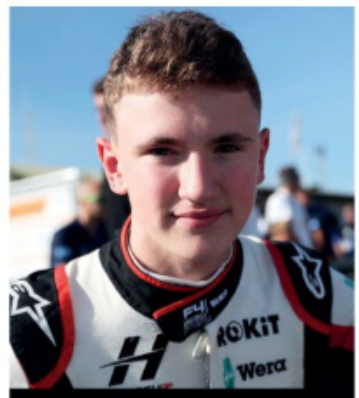
AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS

SAM WELLER

1 When there were five such dominant champions, all heading to the Brands Hatch finale on the brink of their respective titles, it makes it unbelievably tricky to rank them. However, Autosport has attempted to and Weller may be a slightly surprising choice as number one. But the Mini Challenge conqueror faced the largest field of all, packed full of potential title contenders, and never finished outside the top six. Considering that includes partially reversed-grid races, his consistency is very impressive.

JOSH ROWLEDGE

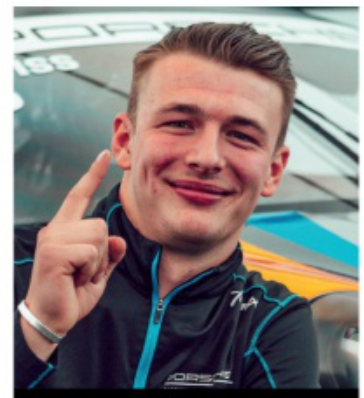
2 Almost as consistent was Ginetta Junior champion Rowledge, but he had just the one slip up at Croft. Again, a very meritorious effort in a series that is famed for its unpredictability. Demonstrated outstanding racecraft to make up for some tricky qualifying sessions and ended the season with nine wins – and it could have been more had he not sat out the final two races to prevent any late penalty points. But ultimately loses out to Weller because he did not have to battle any reversed grids to score his regular podiums.


ALEX DUNNE

3 Perhaps one of the more obvious contenders for top spot but, for all his British F4 dominance, Dunne made far too many errors to be ranked number one when comparing such brilliant seasons. He lost his front wing in the third race at Brands, lost control in Oulton Park race two, lost his cool after stalling off the line at Knockhill, spun again in race two at Thruxton and then played his part in an unnecessarily tempestuous Silverstone weekend. Aside from those misdemeanours, he trounced the opposition.

JAMES KELLETT

4 Another standout driver having rewritten the Ginetta GT4 Supercup record books and boasts the highest win percentage of any TOCA supports driver this year (65%). But the reason he is only fourth is simple: a lack of opposition. At its very largest moment, the top Pro class had just five other drivers and, even then, only Tom Emson seemed capable of halting Kellett's charge. Also blotted his copybook with Knockhill disqualification for clumsy move on Aston Millar. Otherwise, was often mightily impressive.


KIERN JEWISS

5 It does not seem fair that one of these dominant champions is only fifth but someone has to be and, unfortunately for Jewiss, it is him. Was outstanding across the final two Porsche Carrera Cup GB events but, up until then, was neck-and-neck with Will Martin – whose terrible Silverstone and Brands weekends artificially inflated Jewiss's eventual margin in the standings. Focused on improving his qualifying pace this year, and that made a difference, although his poor starts sometimes negated that advantage.

ZANE MARTIN

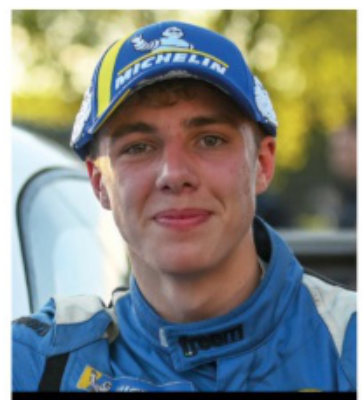
6 This had been looking like it could be Martin's year. After two seasons learning his Carrera Cup trade, having taken the significant leap up from Ginetta Junior with Richardson Racing – which also had no previous Porsche experience – Martin looked the part. And he was right in the mix until being the innocent victim of contact twice in two races at the end of the year. Even without that, probably would not have stopped Jewiss, but would at least have given him more to think about.

ALEX DENNING

7 From the moment he took his first Mini Challenge win in the final race at Knockhill, there was no stopping Denning. Ended the year with seven victories compared to Weller's four, and was undoubtedly the championship's form driver. But an inconsistent start to the year, while still getting to grips with the series after a couple of cameo outings at the end of 2021, meant the Irishman was never likely to challenge Weller, but did beat a host of far more experienced drivers to finish runner-up in the standings.

WILL MACINTYRE

8 We have grown accustomed to rookies shining in their first Ginetta Junior season and Tom Lebbon set that bar unbelievably high when claiming the title in his maiden car racing campaign in 2020. But Macintyre's achievements certainly should not be downplayed. Taking six wins and a further nine podiums is very impressive for a rookie and he was right in the mix at the front from the very first round. He just did not have the same consistency as Rowledge to truly rival him for the crown.


TOM EMSON

9 The only one who could get on terms with Kellett in the GT4 Supercup and, by the time he could, his rival was storming clear in the points. However, given the dominance Kellett enjoyed in the early races, Emson's rate of progress was significant. First win at Snetterton gave him confidence and should have had more at Thruxton but for engine woes and a broken windscreen. Held off Kellett at Brands to prevent the champion winning all weekend but, again, the lack of other opposition must be noted.

ADAM SMALLEY

10 This was another tricky one to decide as there are two runner-ups yet to feature. Smalley gets the nod for his performances in his maiden season of Carrera Cup ahead of second-year F4 driver Oliver Gray, who was too inconsistent and aggressive at Silverstone. Yes, Smalley's second in the points owed to Martin's misery but it still represented a decent effort for the GB Junior, who began the year in style with victory in the opener but could not match the ultimate pace of champion Jewiss.

AUTOSPORT AWARDS 2022

The 35th edition of the Autosport Awards represents a move back to the event's traditional date following the previous edition in February. The 2022 Awards will take place at the Grosvenor House Hotel on London's Park Lane on Sunday 4 December.

Before that, we've got a little request for our readers. We need you to vote, and over the following pages you will see the nominees for International Racing Driver of the Year, British Competition Driver of the Year, UK National Driver of the Year, Rookie of the Year, Racing Car of the Year, Rally Driver of the Year, Rally Car of the Year, plus the Esports Driver of the Year.

You can vote for the candidate you think performed best in each category during the season. The winners will be announced on 4 December, across multiple digital platforms including autosport.com.

The annual extravaganza has been one of the highlights of the year for four decades, and attracts key motorsport figures, including Formula 1 champions and World Rally stars. As well as the awards voted for by you, it will include the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award and the Autosport Williams Engineer of the Future Award, plus the Autosport Gold Medal incorporating the Gregor Grant Award for lifetime achievement.

We'll have all the winners in the 8 December issue of Autosport magazine.

ALL PICS: MOTORSPORT IMAGES AND McKLEIN

ASTON MARTIN

AUTOSPORT WILLIAMS ENGINEER OF THE FUTURE

Bahrain International Circuit

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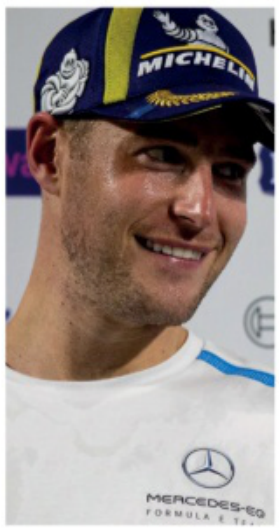
CHARLES LECLERC

Leclerc looked the real deal when fighting for an F1 title for the first time. He crashed while leading in France, but his year was hurt by Ferrari errors. Nine poles showed his speed, while passing Verstappen three times in Austria reflected his racecraft brilliance.

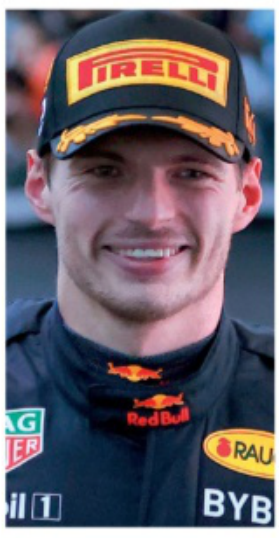
WILL POWER

The Aussie combined caution and guile to the speed he's always had to scoop his second IndyCar title. The Penske star only scored one victory but added eight other podiums across the 17 races to outscore team-mate Josef Newgarden and Ganassi's six-time champion Scott Dixon.



STOFFEL VANDOORNE

Such was Vandoorne's consistency that he only needed one win to secure the Formula E title. He scored points in every race except Mexico; his Monaco victory the fulcrum to a controlled run to the crown. Risk and reward were perfectly balanced by the Belgian.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

The star of the F1 season maximised the Red Bull and has often been unstoppable no matter where he starts. Minor offs and Hungary spin aside, Verstappen has been brilliant and looks like a better driver with that first world title behind him – the second came swiftly.

INTERNATIONAL RACING CAR

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BMW M4 GT3

The new M4 GT3 overcame stiff competition to deliver BMW's first DTM title since 2016 with Sheldon van der Linde. Routinely topping speed traps, the M4 proved a formidable tool in race trim and was quick in qualifying, too. It also won in ADAC GT Masters, British GT and IMSA GTD category.

FERRARI F1-75

Ferrari's finest F1 car for several years came out of the blocks quickly and looked like a potential championship winner. But team errors and unreliability hampered the machine before Red Bull upped its game and drew away at the head of the field. Four wins is still Ferrari's best since 2018.

MERCEDES-EQ SILVER ARROW 02

Taking the mantra of 'quitting while ahead' to heart, Mercedes once more proved the manufacturer to beat in Formula E before exiting. The Silver Arrow 02 won half of the races in 2022, rewarding the works Mercedes squad with another constructors' triumph over 'customer' team Venturi.

RED BULL RB18

There were reliability problems at first and it was initially overweight but the RB18 has come to be *the* car at the start of F1's second ground-effects era. With better tyre degradation and smarter calls from the pitwall than rival Ferrari, Red Bull swept to a title double, with 16 wins from 20 races so far.

INTERNATIONAL RALLY DRIVER

OF THE YEAR

Open to professional or semi-professional rally drivers in international events

SEBASTIEN LOEB

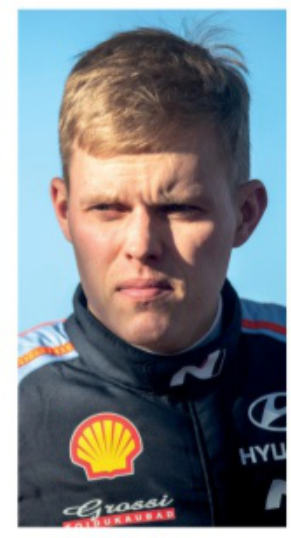
Loeb demonstrated his adaptability across multiple disciplines this year. Runner-up at the Dakar Rally, the Frenchman won the first round of the WRC's Rally1 era at Monte Carlo. Loeb took second in the Rally-Raid series, too, *and* is fighting for the Extreme E title.

THIERRY NEUVILLE

Another year of near-misses, perhaps largely due to Hyundai's reliability issues, as a couple of early season podiums didn't build momentum against the Rovanpera charge. A win in Greece puts him in contention for second in the WRC standings.

KALLE ROVANPERA

Dominated his way to a maiden WRC title, which looked assured when he notched up his fifth win in the first seven rounds. Blips in Belgium and Greece delayed his coronation until October's Rally New Zealand, where he became the youngest world champion.



OTT TANAK

Rovanpera's nearest challenger thanks to wins in Sardinia, Finland and Belgium, but minimal points from the opening two rounds meant Tanak's title fight never looked on. Frustrations with Hyundai have shown but he remains on course to finish best of the rest.

RALLY CAR

OF THE YEAR

Open to cars competing in rallying from international to national level

FORD PUMA RALLY1

Perhaps the surprise package as the fastest out of the blocks with Loeb's Monte Carlo victory, but that's as good as it got. There have been just three further podiums – one of which was Craig Breen's third place at the Monte – and M-Sport has slipped away as the season has progressed.

HYUNDAI i20 N RALLY1

The manufacturer furthest behind on Rally1 preparations, hit by the loss of team principal Andrea Adamo, the i20 was the last of the WRC cars to claim a victory this year. Impressive development saw it comfortably overhaul the M-Sport Ford to mark a solid year but lacked consistency.

TOYOTA GR DKR HILUX

Against tougher competition at the Dakar Rally from Mini, a developed BRX and a new Audi attack, the Toyota remained the class of the field with Nasser Al-Attiyah guiding it to victory and Yazeed Al-Rajhi taking it to third. Qatari Al-Attiyah also captured the World Rally-Raid title.

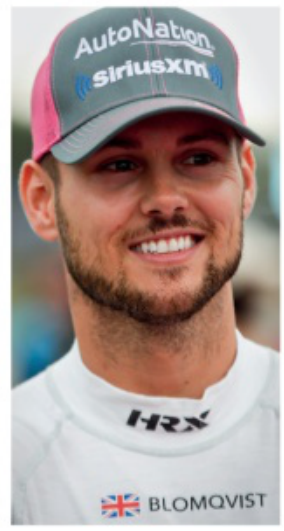
TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1

The class of the WRC field at the start of the Rally1 era, taking Toyota to a clean sweep of world titles, with Rovanpera romping to six victories and Ogier adding another triumph with the final round still to come. A 1-2-3-4 in Kenya demonstrated its superiority against the rest.

BRITISH COMPETITION DRIVER

OF THE YEAR

Open to British drivers competing in categories at international level

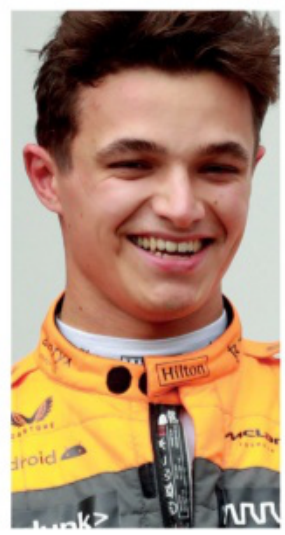


TOM BLOMQVIST

Blomqvist makes this list thanks to a brilliant first season in the Meyer Shank Racing Acura, which netted victories in the Daytona 24 Hours and Petit Le Mans classics, plus the IMSA title alongside fellow Brit Oliver Jarvis. Blomqvist was also a winner in the ETCR electric tin-top series.

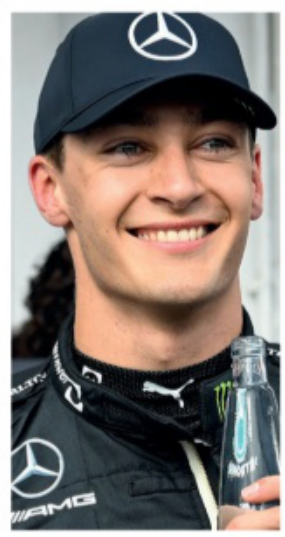
LEWIS HAMILTON

It's arguably Hamilton's toughest F1 season since 2009 and fifth is as low as he has ever finished in the points but he has still shown his class. Hamilton has been a key factor in sorting the troublesome Mercedes W13 and has usually led the team's charge.



LANDO NORRIS

McLaren didn't make the progress it hoped for under F1's new rules, but Norris has remained one of the team's strengths. He has once again blown away team-mate Daniel Ricciardo and his best-of-the-rest performances have kept McLaren in the fight with Alpine.



GEORGE RUSSELL

In his first season at Mercedes, Russell has measured up well against a team-mate as tough and brilliant as Hamilton. He's perhaps had more luck than Lewis, but fine consistency has got him ahead in the points and he took a superb first F1 pole in Hungary.

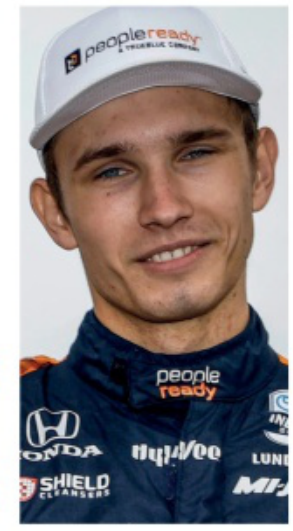
ROOKIE

OF THE YEAR

Open to professional drivers in their first season in their respective categories

RYO HIRAKAWA

Grasped the chance presented to him that had previously gone begging with both hands. Hirakawa didn't quite make the grade when he was groomed by Toyota for an LMP1 seat back in 2017-18, but he showed that he's now got what it takes to compete at the highest level in sportscar racing.

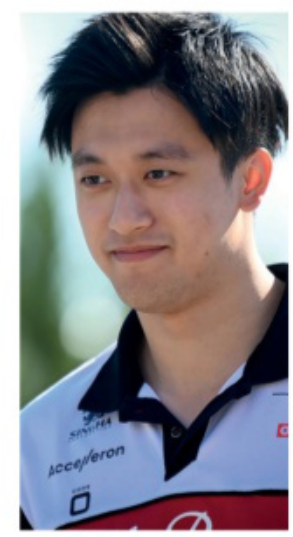


CHRISTIAN LUNDGAARD

Although the Rahal Letterman Lanigan squad struggled, Lundgaard got up to speed quickly in the US. The Dane claimed his first podium with second on the Indy road course, and beat Indy Lights graduate David Malukas to the Rookie of the Year title.

LOGAN SARGEANT

Finances – or lack of them – meant a tricky 2021, but the American has got his career properly back on track with an excellent rookie F2 season at Carlin. Two wins (in feature races) have also got him to the brink of an F1 break. Who needs to raid the IndyCar ranks?



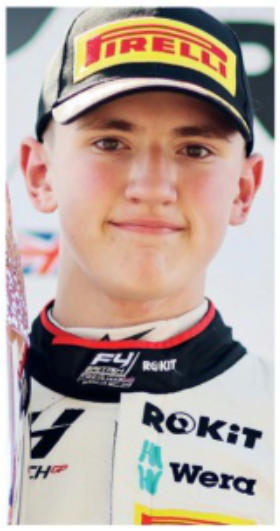
ZHOU GUANYU

Zhou arrived in F1 to unfair criticism for supposedly being a pay driver only. But a point on his debut in Bahrain silenced doubters before he was back in the top 10 at Montreal and Monza. He's avoided the rookie hallmarks of clumsy crashes to deservedly keep his Alfa seat.

NATIONAL DRIVER

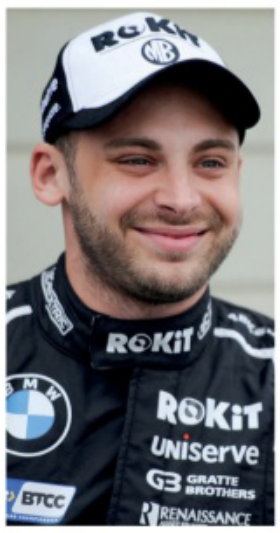
OF THE YEAR

Open to drivers racing in the BTCC, British GT or support categories and equivalent



ALEX DUNNE

There was only ever going to be one champion in British Formula 4 this year. The Irishman was dominant from the opening round and racked up 11 victories with Hitech across the season, the next best achieving just four. Dunne was also second in Italian F4.



JAKE HILL

Under new management from Mark Blundell, Hill finally got the break he deserved with a move to West Surrey Racing. Absolutely made the most of getting his hands on the BMW. Claimed third in points with three wins, and was rarely far from where the action was.

TOM INGRAM

In his second season with the Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai, he finally blew away his nearly-man tag and captured a fully deserved maiden BTCC title. Also won the most races – six. An intelligent competitor who is a magnificent racer to boot, and is popular with the fans.

ASH SUTTON

Had spent most of his BTCC career in rear-wheel-drive machinery and, on his move to the Motorbase Performance Ford line-up, came agonisingly close to adding a fourth title and becoming the first to win it with RWD and FWD cars. Bagged three victories and proved an epic racer again.

ESPORTS DRIVER

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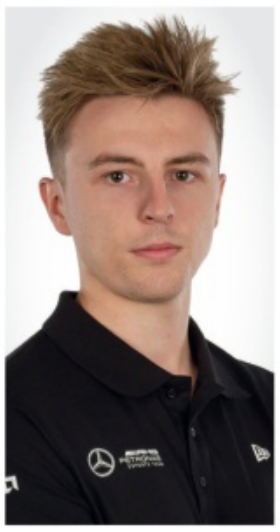
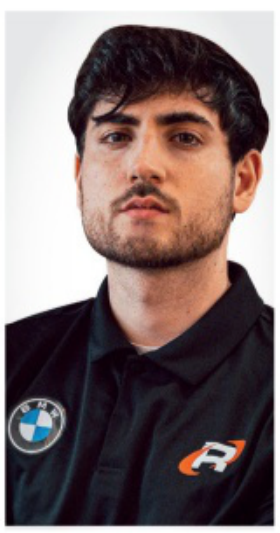


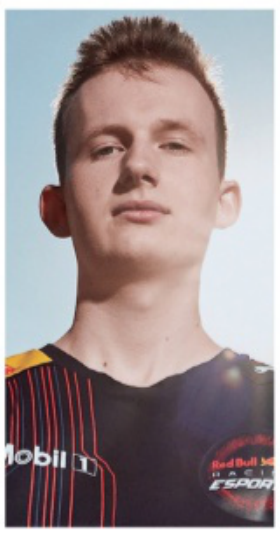
JAMES BALDWIN

Baldwin is perhaps best known for winning the second World's Fastest Gamer competition in 2019, before winning in Brit GT. But it's his efforts this year that net him a nomination, with titles in Alpine Esports, GT World Challenge Europe Esports and Intercontinental GT Challenge Esports.



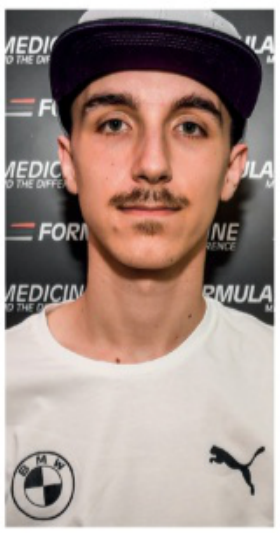
ENZO BONITO

Following a career in F1 Esports and winning the eRace of Champions in 2018, Bonito is nominated primarily for his breadth of ability across multiple different platforms. His performances in the VCO ERL competition and at the Rennsport summit this year show an aptitude for winning.



FREDERIK RASMUSSEN

The laconic Dane is the reigning Autosport Awards victor and is nominated once again following yet another F1 Esports season in title contention, plus back-to-back Formula E Esports crowns. He has now won more F1 Esports races than any other driver.



KEVIN SIGGY

Winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans Virtual GTE class, the Formula Pro Series and DTM Esports within the same season, Siggy's ability across differing platforms and vehicle types is unwavering. His sim performances this year also won him a real-world GT4 season in 2023.

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- React to parts getting close to life limits and work with PMO and Procurement to ensure associated re-order requirements are being actioned.
- Ensure that part lifing information is being captured at tests and races and measure/address any non-conformances in doing this.
- Follow all safety regulations in all venues.
- Other duties as assigned by the PLM Manager.

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Shake-up planned for Thruxton Historic event

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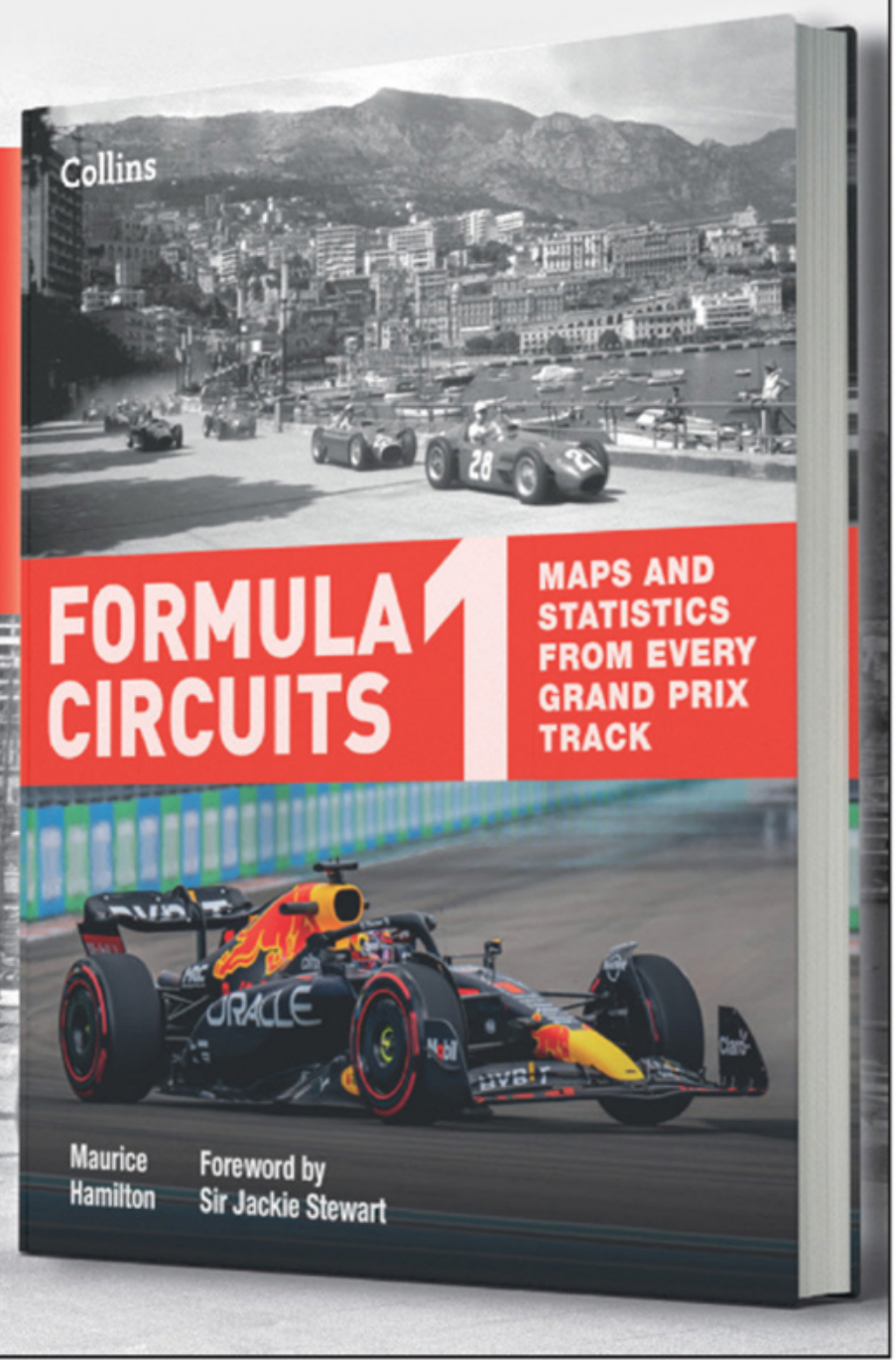

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Legends and Radicals (inset) each get multiple BTCC visits next year

Legends, Caterham, Radical to BTCC

TOCA

Legends, Caterhams and Radicals are all set to feature at British Touring Car meetings next year as a host of national racing categories will make guest appearances.

Following Ginetta's decision to end its 15-year relationship with BTCC organiser TOCA and switch all of its championships to the British GT support bill for 2023, there was space on the BTCC package next season for different classes to join.

While it had already been announced that the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB will increase its BTCC presence from two to six rounds in 2023, there was also scope for club racing series to benefit from being part of the high-profile events. Leading the way is the popular Legends Cars Championship, which will appear at the May Brands Hatch, July Croft and August Knockhill meetings.

"We are absolutely elated with the developments for 2023, which will undoubtedly take our category onto another level," said Legends Cars owner Phil Cooper. "The opportunity to run alongside the BTCC at three events is incredible and something I know our drivers and teams are going to make the most of. For a very long time, people have said to us we ought to be racing with the BTCC – next year I am delighted to say we will be!"

Caterham will also have a presence at a BTCC event with its top-tier Seven Championship UK – for 420R models – joining the bill for the September Silverstone National round, after British Formula 4 elected to instead race on the Grand Prix circuit in June.

"I think it's a fantastic opportunity for Caterham," said its chief motorsport and technical officer Simon Lambert. "We know our racing is unbelievably close and it's getting that out to a wider audience.

Caterham Seven Championship UK gets a special calendar for 2023

"Silverstone National always gives good racing, so hopefully it will be a crowd-pleaser. The last time we were there, our finishes were measured in hundredths of a second so I'm hoping that's what we can do again. I'm confident we can put on a good show and I hope it means we get to do more in future years."

The BTCC round is part of an exciting Caterham calendar for 2023 as the manufacturer celebrates its 50th birthday. The 420Rs will join British GT at the Portuguese Algarve circuit as well as visit Zandvoort and feature at a special Caterham-only anniversary event at Donington Park in September, where the factory championships will be joined by the Caterham Graduates classes.

Meanwhile, Radical will also make its BTCC debut as its revamped Radical Cup UK category – combining its Challenge and SR1 Cup series – will appear at Snetterton in May and Oulton Park in June.

"We hope that in 2023 the calibre of our drivers combined with the high-profile promotion from TOCA will showcase the great opportunity of a career ladder that we can offer," said Radical's global motorsport director Tom Drewer.

Of the decision to merge its series for next year, Radical's UK motorsport manager Nicole Van Der Walt said it will create "true multi-class racing" and result in a "more intense and strategic dynamic to the action".

"This also means that, in addition to the SR1 and SR3 models, the turbocharged SR10, SR8, RXC and RXC Spyder models will also be eligible to compete," she said.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Cooksport and BRSCC plan new Renault series

COOKSPORT RENAULT CUP

Cooksport has a long association with Renaults

British Touring Car driver Josh Cook's Cooksport tuning and parts company and the British Racing & Sports Car Club have teamed up to launch a new Renault category for next season.

Cook was the 2014 Renault UK Clio Cup runner-up and Cooksport has built, provided parts for and run scores of the French hatchbacks in recent years. But there is not currently a dedicated category for more modern Clios and Meganes to compete against similar cars, leading to the new Cooksport Renault Cup series being launched.

Cooksport and the BRSCC already have an existing partnership having collaborated on the Mk7 Fiesta Junior car introduced this year. Initially, the Renault series is set to form part of a new Evolution Trophy grid from the BRSCC that will feature various categories it is attempting to develop — including its Mazda MX-5 Mk4 Trophy, BMW 1 Series Supercup and Classic VW Cup — but is then set to progress from there.

"People love the cars and they're great to drive," said Cook. "There are probably cheaper ways to go faster but it's not just about building a fast car, it's about close racing. Part of the issue we see nowadays with the Clios and Meganes is there are lots of them around and there's no place for them to go and race. When you do race, it's all multi-marque. When you get some cars against the Renaults — that have certain regulation restraints — they're not always competitive.

"The BRSCC were keen to get some sort of Renault one-make championship together, we have a lot of customers and a lot of race cars and ended up with a place that you can bring all these Renaults to. That could be a near-standard car or a full-blown 600bhp Megane, they can all race each other."

Cook believes the regulations for the series will evolve over time to form a class structure that allows a wide range of Renaults to race competitively. He says there has been a huge amount of interest since plans were revealed at the end of last month, including from some former Clio Cup teams, and aims to entice trackday cars into the series.

"The trackday market for Renaults is huge and there are a lot of track cars that get built," explained Cook. "This gives them an opportunity to take that next step from trackdays."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Moyers swaps to a Medina for Hayes

FF1600

Two-time Walter Hayes Trophy winner Michael Moyers will compete in this weekend's event at the wheel of a Simon Hadfield Motorsport-run Medina.

Moyers, who took back-to-back victories at the Silverstone-based contest in 2017 and 2018 with a Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum, had initially intended to step away from Formula Ford after last year's event.

But plans to move into historic racing have failed to materialise, and a discussion to race at the WHT with a view to potential further outings was too good to resist.

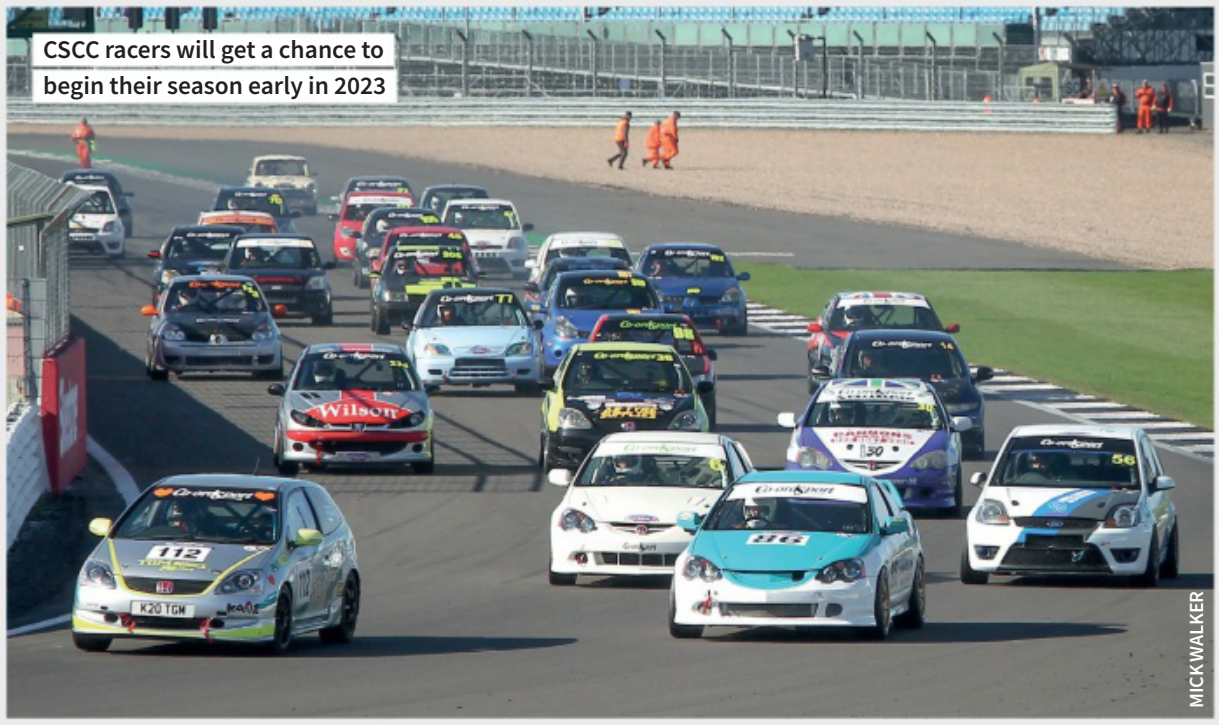
"The main thing is it's a foot in the door with a team that runs lots of historic cars," said Moyers, who hasn't raced since the WHT last year. "I spoke with James Hadfield and he explained about a project they were putting together and if I would be interested in joining for the Hayes. We think the car will raise a few eyebrows, it's a Medina chassis but with quite a few radical differences.

Moyers has usually raced a KMR Spectrum but has new challenge

"I'm going to be right up against it. I've not raced in a year, I'm with a team that's not generally used to running newer machinery and in a car that's slightly unproven. But I'm quietly confident and definitely think we'll be at the sharp end."

Also among more than 100 drivers entered for this year's WHT are Josh Fisher — runner-up to Moyers in 2017 — and Ben Mitchell, both at the wheel of Wayne Poole Racing-run Van Diemens.

STEFAN MACKLEY



CSCC racers will get a chance to begin their season early in 2023

February start for 2023 CSCC season on Silverstone GP track

CLASSIC SPORTS CAR CLUB

The Classic Sports Car Club's season is due to have its earliest ever start next year, with the opening event planned for Silverstone in February.

The 26 February fixture on the Grand Prix layout is the day after the Vintage Sports-Car Club's annual multi-discipline Pomeroy Trophy event and is before club racing traditionally begins in March. It is designed to help those "keen to get out and blow away the cobwebs".

"It's an unusual time of year to put on a race meeting but it works for other events, like the Plum Pudding," said club director David Smitheram, who added the weather will be a key factor in the event's success. "At that time of year, we're not competing with anyone else."

The CSCC — which is celebrating its 20th birthday in 2023 — is also set to visit Croft for the first time in six years, the North Yorkshire venue being the scene of the club's inaugural standalone meeting in 2004. Mallory Park also returns to the schedule and a "special" event is planned at Anglesey in July, alongside Snetterton, Thruxton, Brands Hatch, Donington Park and Oulton Park visits.

But Spa is absent amid concerns over Carnets and the planned imposition of new biometric passport checks when crossing the English Channel. The season ends with the previously announced celebration trips to Sebring and Daytona in November.

Smitheram added variety was a key factor when preparing the calendar. "We think it's important to mix it up," he said. "We have some drivers who have not raced anywhere else for the last 10 or 15 years and we've got to give them a reason why they should keep racing with us."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Fernandez is the new Ginetta scholar

GINETTA JUNIOR

Chase Fernandez has been selected as the Ginetta Junior scholarship winner after a series of assessments at Blyton Park last week.

The teenager has secured a fully funded season in the category next year — when it moves across from the British Touring Car Championship support bill to race alongside British GT — having impressed in a range of driving, fitness and media tests. He follows in the footsteps of 2022 scholar Alisha Palmowski, who finished 13th in this year's standings.

"I never expected to be here as the winner, it's an incredible feeling," said Fernandez, who has spent the past four seasons karting and was chosen from 60 teenagers. "The competition has been really high this year with some great drivers taking part, so to win against such a talented entry is just amazing.

"I'm going to be making my racing debut in the Winter Series [next weekend], which will be a great taster for what's to come. I'm going to put everything I've got in to 2023 and I'm going to do the best I can to represent Ginetta and have a successful season."

IN THE HEADLINES

SHARP TOPS BRITISH F4 TEST

Race winner Louis Sharp topped the timesheets of British Formula 4's two-day Snetterton 'New Driver' test last week. Carlin racer Sharp, fourth in this year's standings, was one of five 2022 drivers taking part, also including fellow winner Daniel Guinchard – who switched from Argenti to Virtuosi. Among the notable new names were Ginetta Junior racers Freddie Slater (second fastest for Carlin), Will Macintyre and Kanato Le (both Hitech).

GOLLIN BROTHERS RETURN

After five years away from racing, brothers Josh and Nathaniel Gollin returned to action at Cadwell Park last weekend. The pair, Fiesta race winners, drove their dad's Caterham Academy car to 15th in the 40-minute Magnificent Sevens race before Josh – having returned to the UK after spending three-and-a-half years in Australia – improved to eighth in the 20-minute sprint race.

BIRD HEADS OULTON ENTRY

Last year's winners Frank Bird and Jack Morton (Ford Fiesta Rally2) head the 100-crew entry for the Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park on Saturday, for the opening round of the revamped MGJ Engineering Circuit Rally Championship. There are four other former winners back: Kevin Procter (Fiesta S2000T), Stephen Simpson (Fiesta Rally2), Graham Coffey (Fiesta S2000T) and Kim Mather, with wife Yvonne navigating, in a Talbot Sunbeam.

DONNELLY BACK TO BRX

Former British Rallycross champion Mark Donnelly will return to the category for this weekend's season finale at Lydden Hill. The 2020 champion has not competed in the series since curtailing his title defence midway through last year, but will return in a Citroen C4 (below) that has already been driven by fellow past title winners Nathan Heathcote and Christopher Evans this season.

STEVE JONES

Frenchman (r) helped Capture team finish fifth in Scratch race

Guintoli hits his stride on four wheels

BIRKETT RELAY

Sylvain Guintoli, the 2014 World Superbike champion, made a return to four-wheel action at the Birkett Six Hour Relay race at Silverstone last Saturday.

The French driver's previous car racing experience comprised Radical Challenge appearances in 2016 but, in the Birkett, he drove for the Capture Motorsport team in a VW Golf TCR shared with Andrew Shephard.

"The first time I heard about the event was when my best mate [Shephard] entered the race, and we decided to go at it together," explained the 40-year-old, who currently competes in the FIM World Endurance Championship. "It is great because you can come with your mates and have a lot of fun on-track."

Guintoli drove a stint late in the classic Silverstone endurance contest, setting the team's fastest lap of the race and bringing the squad home in fifth position on scratch, as well as being the first non-Radical team.

"The TCR car, because it is front-wheel drive and you tip the car in — like trail-braking — that is very similar to what we do with the bikes," he said. "It's a bit different, but good fun, and I haven't driven on track with four wheels for a while."

He hopes to take in more car racing in 2023, subject to finding time around racing and commitments to BT Sport, for whom he is part of the MotoGP coverage.

IAN SOWMAN

Clarke returns to racing after Oulton smash

BIRKETT RELAY

Veteran racer Kevin Clarke returned to action in the Birkett Six Hour Relay race at Silverstone just three weeks after a horrific shunt into the pitwall during the Club Enduro contest at Oulton Park left him hospitalised.

"That was just a racing incident — I don't consider I did anything wrong, it was just a question of two into one wouldn't go," he said of his clash with a backmarker towards the end of the race in Cheshire.

"I feel quite good, I still have aches and pains but I have been told I will have those for a long time. It is like falling off a bike — you just have to get straight back on."

Clarke started the Birkett for Simon Green Motorsport, borrowing a BMW E46 M3 from Lucky Khera. The team finished 13th in both the Scratch and Handicap classifications, winning its class in the latter.

"I have been astounded at how many marshals and rescue crew guys have come over and wished me well after my accident," Clarke added.

IAN SOWMAN

Short/Garofall share Lumina at Silverstone

BIRKETT RELAY

Le Mans racer Martin Short and European Le Mans Series champion Rob Garofall shared Short's newly acquired Chevrolet Lumina V8 in the Birkett Six Hour Relay race at Silverstone last weekend, forming part of the Very Random Racers squad that finished 40th on handicap.

"I saw it on Facebook two weeks ago – it has a Chevrolet engine in, like the Mosler, so it appealed to me and was a bit of a bargain," said Short.

"It raced in a one-make series in Bahrain in about 2005, and its previous owner restored it to its original condition. It needs a bit of work because it is awesome in the wet, but terrible in the dry."

Chevrolet Lumina V8 hit the track in Birkett

STEVE JONES

Short – who previously raced in the Birkett in a Rover 216 GTI in the early 1990s – plans to prepare the car for racing with his sons Morgan and Marcus in 2023, after he limped out of Saturday's race with a tyre failure. The event was Garofall's first race since he secured the 2018 ELMS LMP3 title for RLR Motorsport.

IAN SOWMAN

Richings ends 51-year racing career with final outing

CLUBMANS

Ending a racing career spanning 51 years, of which 41 were in Clubmans sportscars, Pete Richings finished fifth in Saturday's MotorSport Vision Racing championship finale at Donington in his Mallock Mk30PR.

Fellow competitors marked the occasion with a surprise celebratory photo session on the grid for the 71-year-old, hooked on the racing bug by a visit to Goodwood with his father on Easter Monday, 1956.

Highlights from 500+ races, alongside professional work at Jaguar Land Rover (which spawned Clubmans' Rover K/MG X-Power engine era), were the Mineral Improvements championship in 1988 and Sports 1600 title in 2016.

He was also a proud member of Chris Hart's Hart Attacks team, which won three 750 Motor Club Birkett Six Hour Relay races, on handicap in 1996 and scratch in 1999 and 2001.

MARCUS PYE

Richings is joined by the Clubmans field on the grid at his final race at Donington

JOY RICHINGS

IN THE HEADLINES

GEOFF WEEKS 1949-2022

The passing of 'Gentleman Geoff' Weeks, from throat cancer, has done far more than rob ARDS of a popular and long-serving instructor. Weeks raced in Modsports from 1974 into the 1980s with the Whitegates Service Station MG Midget. He joined the inaugural BMW Car Club Championship in 1988 with an E12 535i, and founded his successful ETA Motorsport business, specialising in BMW, near Brands Hatch in 1998. From 2002 he was partnered by stepson Matt Smith, who continues the tradition.

BLAIR STILL IN THE HUNT

Turismo X points leader Adam Blair was forced to make a hasty car switch ahead of the championship's penultimate round at Donington Park. Previously, Blair had raced in a Darkside Audi TT but a change of priorities by his sponsor led to the search for an alternative. Team Hard's Tony Gilham answered the call and supplied his squad's VW Golf, which enabled Blair to keep his championship hopes alive with two strong finishes.

CLARKE EXCLUDED

Turismo X racer Richard Clarke was excluded from the meeting at Donington Park following an apparently aggressive outburst towards Jonathan Mee in parc ferme after the first race. The incident was witnessed by championship officials, with Clarke also handed six points on his racing licence.

HAYWARD MOVES UP

After sealing her third Clubmans Sports Prototype CSP2 crown last time out, Wrexham's Michelle Hayward enjoyed the taste of an extra 70bhp by moving up to the CSP1 class for the season finale at Donington Park. After taking a best result of sixth overall in the opening race in a Phantom P79 (below), she now hopes to be able to secure a full campaign in the class for 2023.

GARY HAWKINS

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Thruxton to revamp its Historic event

HISTORICS

Larger grids and a wider variety of categories will shape next year's Thruxton Historic event, to be curated by the circuit itself following the end of its multi-year partnership with Motor Racing Legends.

Circuit manager Pat Blakeney — himself an ex-Historic Formula 1 racer — is committed to broadening the 17-18 June fixture's appeal in celebrating the UK's fastest track's legacy since 1968.

"We are only able to host six meetings a year, so the opportunity to race here doesn't come along all the time," said Blakeney. "As a result, we have had some really exciting approaches from championships, series and groups who would like to come here next year as a one-off.

"We're not so concerned with the 'Historic' label. It's more important to get a quality retro event together that provides great racing for the competitors, and a brilliant spectacle for the crowds. We will also put a lot of effort into getting the entertainment package right off the circuit to make a special atmosphere."

Jochen Rindt Trophy was one of the highlights of 2022 Thruxton Historic

STEVE JONES

The Jochen Rindt Trophy double-header, headlined by Formula 2 cars from 1967-72 and FAtlantic machinery, will remain a colourful centrepiece of the programme for a third year. Organised by competitor Rob Manger under the Classic Racing Car Club banner, its 28-car entry provided superb focal points to both days in June this year.

"I am encouraged by the ongoing support of competitors and am confident we will have one of the best Classic F3 fields of the season," said Manger. "Besides the two-litre cars from 1974-88, it would be great to welcome the 1600cc cars of 1971-73, which are out there but rarely seen. They will remind enthusiasts of late champion Ian Taylor, who started the Racing Drivers' School at Thruxton."

MRL's categories at this year's event were blighted by poor entries, with only 10 starters for the Historic Touring Car Challenge, eight for the Sixties Touring Car Challenge and just five for the combined Pre-'63 GT and Jaguar Classic grid.

MARCUS PYE

Haddon and Wolfe win Algarve GTSCC finale

HISTORICS

Britons Andrew Haddon and Andy Wolfe (Lotus Elan) won Sunday's two-hour GT & Sports Car Cup seasonal finale, which attracted the largest visiting grid — an impressive 28 cars — to the annual Classic Festival that showcased the Autodromo Internacional Algarve in perfect conditions last weekend.

Haddon engaged in an early battle with Justin Maeers's Cooper Monaco behind leader Chris Chiles Jr's AC Cobra. Another Cobra roared into contention when Olivier Gallant was relayed by father Xavier in their Daytona Coupe. The Frenchmen took second, a lap behind the winners and one ahead of the Maeers/Ben Maeers/Charlie Martin Cooper, which ran out of fuel on the final tour.

Sixth overall, Mark Holme/Jeremy Welch claimed GT3 honours from fellow Austin-Healey 3000 duo David Smithies/Chris Clarkson. A late splash-and-dash for Marc Gordon's Lotus Elite, while leading GT2, advantaged Mark Hope/Jason Minshaw (MGB).

Haddon and Wolfe had already tasted success on Saturday. Andrew narrowly won the Masters Gentlemen Drivers Pre-'66 GT race in the Elan from John Spiers/Nigel Greensall (TVR Griffith). Andy, meanwhile, topped Masters Sportscar Legends, with Julian Thomas, in a Lola T70.

Large 28-car field tackled the Portuguese circuit

SENTEN IMAGES

Marco Werner (Lotus 87B) beat Williams-mounted Mike Cantillon (FW07C), Martin O'Connell (FW08C) and Lukas Halusa (FW08) in Masters Formula 1 on Saturday. Cantillon won Sunday's sequel from Werner and Steve Hartley (McLaren MP4/1). Kriton Lendoudis (Peugeot 908) and Christian Glaesel (Pescarolo) took Endurance Legends spoils.

Michael Gans tasted glory with an Historic Grand Prix Cars Association double in his ex-Bruce McLaren Tasman Cooper T79 over Rudi Friedrichs (Cooper T53). Jeremy Timms (1000cc F3 Chevron B15) won the Filipe Nogueira Trophy races, chased by FJunior standout Alex Ames (Brabham BT6).

MARCUS PYE

Routec rides high in Birkett Relay Handicap

SILVERSTONE
750MC BIRKETT RELAY
29 OCTOBER

Roche, Gadsby and Whitehouse topped Handicap with BMWs

Routec Racing's BMW Compacts won a dramatic Birkett Six Hour Relay, taking the lead from sister team the BMW Triers in the final 30 minutes at an unseasonably warm Silverstone.

The Handicap trophy, as ever, was the premier prize at the endurance classic and the Routec Compact squad was the seventh different leader to appear on the half-hourly bulletins. Not among them, however, were previous double winners The Three Amigos, which also fielded Compacts, as the crew had for their 2019 and 2020 successes. Paul Hinson had a heavy off at Copse, causing one of six safety car periods, while multiple Hot Hatch champion David Drinkwater's version regularly overheated, leaving Adam Read to do much of the driving.

The Routec squad had better fortune, however, with its plan to complete the race with just two pitstops proving flexible. "They've binned me off because I am a bit too slow and put a quick guy out there now, Martin Gadsby," admitted Martin Roche in the final hour of the race. That change may have proved vital, as the Compacts — with Colin Whitehouse also part of the line-up — finished only 24 seconds clear.

A squad of MR2 Roadsters — Lock Stops & Two Smoking Tyres — headed by championship race winner Adam Lockwood and also featuring Jim Mew and Danny Bryant, took the runner-up spot, having been leading at three-quarters distance. The best of several teams comprised of CALM All Porsche Trophy regulars — Dads and Their Lads (Daniel Crego with the McHugh and Walker families) completed the podium, and also took a class win.

Last year's winner, now known as RAF Team Flywheel, was classified only 48th after a number of issues for the team's cars. They lost out on the intra-service battle to fellow RAF Team Per Ardua, which placed sixth overall.

The early leaders, MX-5-based outfit Red Rascal (which won when entering M3s in 2018) lost a number of laps when one of its number was disqualified for a flag infringement, while Triple A's Racing ran strongly mid-race only to be re-handicapped for using slicks. Another MX-5 team, Mazda Misfits, topped three of the 12 interim standings, but was classified fifth.

The battle for scratch honours was equally as intriguing, although only four Radical-based squads were in

Webb/Watson and Nuttall share Seven victories

CADWELL PARK
CSCC
29 OCTOBER

In challenging conditions at Cadwell Park, Rich Webb chased down Stephen Nuttall to snatch a Magnificent Sevens victory for himself and Dave Watson before Nuttall hit back in the sprint race.

Watson led away on a greasy track but polesitter Nuttall pounced in the Hall

Nuttall was flying high in the Magnificent Sevens

MICK WALKER

Bends. Watson's Spire RB7 then shadowed the leading Caterham Supersport until a spin cost him around 15 seconds.

Pitstops complete, Nuttall now held a lead of 13s over Webb with less than half of the 40-minute race remaining. A series of quick laps from Webb on the drying track slashed the deficit and, as Nuttall tried in vain to respond on worn wet tyres, Webb swept ahead at Coppice on the final tour. "I didn't have a lot left to give," said Webb. Behind the leaders, Tim Davis seized on a couple of spins for the second Spire of John Cutmore to claim third.

The sun was poking through for the 20-minute sequel and, having switched to dry tyres, Nuttall was "on a mission". After tracking Watson while his rubber got up to temperature, last year's Caterham Seven UK champion passed on the Park Straight, then pulled away to a 30s victory. Watson was struggling on wets, a nosecone-damaging excursion on oil at the Gooseneck not helping. Cutmore also suffered on the oil, losing third to Davis again.

Returning to Tin Tops after recent Modern Classics outings, Tom Mensley claimed his first win of the year. His Renault Clio duked with Adam Brown's Ford Fiesta ST through the opening corners before Brown got the upper hand. With a 30s success penalty to overcome, Brown built a 7s lead in as many laps before Mensley pitted. Both crews managed super-fast turnarounds but Brown emerged nearly 20s down. He was 12s in arrears when the chequered flag flew five minutes early after a big blow-up for John Ridgeon's Clio. John Hammersley and Nigel Tongue (VW Scirocco) saw off the Clio 197s of Tom Oatley and James Joannou in the concurrent Turbo Tin Tops.

On his first visit to the circuit, Connor Kay overcame a success penalty to win in Swinging Sixties Group 1. In the frantic early stages, Mini-mounted trio Ralph Budd (due to relay son Charlie), Matthew Howell and Chris Watkinson were all forced out

STEVE JONES

Scratch win went the way of RAW squad aboard Radical SR3s
STEVE JONES

with a realistic chance of victory in a race defined by reliability and penalties.

The quickest of the teams – as evidenced by 2020 winner Shane Stoney's fastest lap – was the Doris NWH outfit that also featured Roger Bromiley, Mark Williams and Ryan Harper-Ellam. This crew led for the first four hours, whereupon a gearbox issue on one car and a coil issue on another temporarily left the outfit with only one functioning SR3.

Nevertheless, Stoney was able to get home with second position for the team, benefiting when RJ Motorsport 1 was forced to serve a stop/go penalty for a yellow-flag contravention, minutes after Wade Eastwood had taken the lead and minutes before the scheduled end of the race. That crew – also featuring Alastair Smart and Charles Graham – had been only sixth after the first damp half-hour, but moved towards the front as others had issues. The trio eventually finished third, continuing a run of seven podiums for Graham.

The winner, though, was RAW Motorsports – Rob's Wronguns, with Chris Preen taking the chequered flag in his Radical SR3 XX. In spite of two separate penalties, the team – also including John Macleod and Ben Stone in SR3 RSXs – emerged 20s clear.

IAN SOWMAN

Mensley took Tin Tops win at the wheel of his Renault Clio
MICK WALKER

after skirmishes. That left Kay's MG Midget in front from James Hughes's Austin-Healey Frogeye Sprite. The pair traded the lead, but a delay as the Spite refused to restart cost penalty-free Hughes much of his theoretical pitstop advantage. Kay closed him down and pounced for victory in traffic.

In the fading light, Stephen Pickering (Sunbeam Tiger) led Group 2's early stages but his 30s success penalty dropped him behind Dean Halsey's Datsun 240Z. Halsey had been hounded by Group 1 guest Watkinson in the opening stint before a slow pitstop and traffic cost the Mini driver. Likely contenders – albeit facing success penalties – Jamie Keevill (Lotus Elan S2) and Jon Wolfe (TVR Tuscan V8) were forced out by driveshaft and differential failures respectively.

The advantage swung back and forth in a combined Modern Classics and Future Classics race. But, once released from traffic, the Triumph TR7 V8 of Martyn and Rob Adams ultimately had the legs on Shaun Ely's nippy Peugeot 205 GTI. Clinton Ewen (BMW M3 E36) took Modern Classics honours.

MARK PAULSON

WEEKEND WINNERS

SILVERSTONE (BIRKETT RELAY)

HANDICAP

1 Routec Racing's BMW Compacts: Martin Roche, Martin Gadsby, Colin Whitehouse (BMW Compacts) 149 laps (118+31 credit); 2 Lock Stops and Two Smoking Tyres: Adam Lockwood, Jim Mew, Danny Bryant (Toyota MR2 Mk3s) 149 (121+28); 3 CAP Dads and Their Lads: Daniel Crego (Porsche 968CS), Tom McHugh (Porsche 944 S2), Jamie McHugh (Porsche 944 Turbo), Jon Walker, Christian Walker (Porsche Boxster Ss) 149 (126+23); 4 Routec Racing's BMW Triers: James Dalzell, Rob Lyons, Andy Wynne (BMW 330Cis), Sergei Mineev (Compact) 149 (122+27); 5 Mazda Misfits: Simon Walker-Hansell, Stephen Reece, Alex Wilkinson-Hughes, William Pickard, Nicola Favot, James McCann (Mazda MX-5 Mk1s) 149 (119+30); 6 RAF Team Per Ardua: Rob Stark (Peugeot 306 S16), Olly Waind (Renault Clio 182), Lloyd Huggins (MX-5 Mk1), Brian Watson (Peugeot 206 GTI) 149 (119+30). **Class winners** CAP Dads and Their Lads; Simon Green Motorsport: Kevin Clarke, Jas Sapra, Bryan Bransom (BMW E46 M3s), Aldo Riti, John Stack (MX-5s), Mike Rudge (Ford Fiesta); St Winifred's School Choir: Chris Fantana (MX-5 Mk1), Jon Glover (Ford Puma), Nick Glover (MX-5 Mk2), Alex Hughes (Vauxhall Astra), Jez Banks (BMW 116i).

SCRATCH

1 RAW Motorsports – Rob's Wronguns: Chris Preen (Radical SR3 XX), John Macleod, Ben Stone (Radical SR3 RSXs) 143 laps; 2 Doris NWH: Roger Bromiley, Mark Williams, Shane Stoney, Ryan Harper-Ellam (Radical SR3s) +20.45s; 3 RJ Motorsport 1: Alastair Smart (Radical PR6), Charles Graham, Wade Eastwood (SR3 RSXs); 4 RJ Motorsport 2: Ash Hicklin (SR3 RS), Leon Morrell, Matt Jones (SR3 RSXs), Charles Hall (SR3); 5 Capture Motorsport: William Beech, Mark Grice, Colin Gillespie (Cupra TCR), Andrew Shephard, Sylvain Guintoli (VW Golf TCRs); 6 Prep'n'lay/Gee Sport: Russell Dack, Paul Wood, James Card, Jason West (E46 M3s). **CW** Capture Motorsport; Brake Dancers 1: Allan Curtis, Harry Eyre, Tim Steel (Caterham 310Rs); St Winifred's School Choir. **Fastest lap** Stoney 2m06.31s (104.60mph). **Pole** RAW Motorsports – Rob's Wronguns. **Starters** 70.

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

CADWELL PARK

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Race 1 Dave Watson/Rich Webb (Spire RB7)
Race 2 Stephen Nuttall (Caterham Supersport)

TIN TOPS/TURBO TIN TOPS

Tom Mensley (Renault Clio Cup 172)

SWINGING SIXTIES

Group 1 Connor Kay (MG Midget)
Group 2 Dean Halsey (Datsun 240Z)

MODERN CLASSICS/FUTURE CLASSICS

Martyn Adams/Rob Adams (Triumph TR7 V8)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

There was class glory for Clark but Tester (inset) took overall crown

GARY HAWKINS

GARY HAWKINS

Clark wins as Tester takes title in tricky conditions

DONINGTON PARK
MSVR
29 OCTOBER

Porsche Club GB and the Clubmans Register enjoy histories that date back to the 1960s and, though operating within contrasting areas of the club scene, share the attributes of not only producing well-supported grids but also delivering heart and soul to the paddock. This was in evidence at the finals weekend for both last Saturday at Donington Park.

The Porsche Club championship hosts a combined grid of former Cup cars, Caymans, and Boxsters, split into two classes. New to the championship this year, Colin Tester (in a Class 2 Boxster) arrived heading the overall standings, but it was the battles and rivalries at the front of the Class 1 grid that stole the show.

Rain overnight meant Simon Clark (996) and Pete Morris (997) were outpaced by Matt Kyle-Henney's Cayman S in tricky qualifying conditions. With dampness prevailing, tyre choices for the afternoon's racing were to prove critical. Polesitter Kyle-Henney decided on slicks, as did Morris. Clark, however, seeking championship success, opted for wets. As the red lights went out, Clark appeared to have chosen wisely; Kyle-Henney's rears spinning wildly, while Morris could only ease away from the line. Clark headed the way into Redgate and Morris immediately found himself under pressure — Kyle-Henney, however, dropped right down the order and was soon out of the top 10.

Tester didn't fare much better. He too had struggled off the line and was down to fourth in Class 2. Meanwhile, Clark's lead looked to be extending comfortably until the safety car was deployed, and the pack regrouped. He managed the restart well, but the slick runners knew their time was coming.

By the midpoint, the track had clear dry lines. Kyle-Henney went quickest of all as he set about his fightback, colouring the timing screens purple every time he crossed the line. Nevertheless, the gap to Morris, who had passed Clark at the chicane, seemed beyond reach. Tester was also making progress, picking off his rivals carefully to move into the class lead.

With the clock counting down, Kyle-Henney was ever quicker and, when Morris encountered traffic, the two were suddenly just metres apart. The flag was readied but, crossing the line almost as one, there was two seconds still to go. Kyle-Henney tried every which way, but Morris, though fair, was robust in defence and claimed his fifth win of the year by 0.2s.

In the second outing, Clark's fresh slick rubber proved too hard to beat, giving the former champion the consolation of class honours. A controlled drive from Tester not only secured him the Boxster class crown but the overall title to cap his season.

The Boxster Cup grid produced some equally thrilling racing. Wayne Gregory won the class in both outings, behind the 911 of overall winner Tim Bates, but only by three hundredths in race two from Shiraz Khan in a dramatic sprint to the line. Pete Evans did all that was needed to top the standings in only his second year of racing.

Alex Champkin's Phantom proved unbeatable in Clubmans Sports Prototypes, but Steve Dickens and Jarred Lester pushed him hard, while Clive Wood and Tom Bellamy adding quality and speed to the podium fights. But an honourable mention must go to veteran racer Peter Richings, bowing out after half a century of competition with a marvellous fifth (from eighth) in his final race in his Mallock.

STEVE HINDLE

WEEKEND WINNERS

PORSCHE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Peter Morris (997 C2S)
Race 2 Simon Clark (996 C2)

PORSCHE 911 CHALLENGE & BOXSTER CUP
Races 1 & 2 Tim Bates (911)

CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPES
Races 1 & 2 Alex Champkin (Phantom PR21, below)

TURISMO X
Races 1 & 2 Darren Goes (Audi RS3 TCR)

GARY HAWKINS

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Bell rings the changes with first BRC win

CAMBRIAN RALLY
BRC
28-29 OCTOBER

JEP
Skoda driver Bell was top of the BRC runners in Wales

With six rounds down of the British Rally Championship, only two drivers had taken wins during the 2022 season. But, with both victors — champion Osian Pryce and runner-up Keith Cronin — electing to skip the series finale, there would be a chance for a new generation of BRC stars to shine at the Cambrian Rally last weekend.

Whoever took a maximum score in the world-class North Wales forests would be a first-time BRC winner and, while the champions had been decided in Yorkshire in September, there was plenty at stake for the BRC1 hopefuls. Axed Hyundai World Rally Championship driver Oliver Solberg would also contest the event in a Volkswagen Polo R5, giving the series contenders the perfect benchmark.

Two closed-road asphalt tests in the darkness of Friday night added a twist to the event and, while Solberg secured the lead, it was Skoda Fabia pilot Garry Pearson who headed the BRC crews after the opening leg.

But, by the time the clocks had stopped on the first gravel test on Saturday morning, it was fellow Skoda driver Ruairi Bell who had charged to the front after Pearson struggled in the rain-soaked conditions.

Like the other crews, Bell and co-driver Max Freeman battled with the waterlogged stages but kept largely out of trouble to enjoy an 11-second lead over Pearson heading into the final stage of the morning loop. However, Pearson failed to emerge from the Penmachno test after damaging his steering.

Solberg was almost two minutes up the road at the finish and, with a rather sparse National entry, Bell was able to cruise to his maiden BRC victory.

"It's been such a difficult weekend out on the stages, and we have had three podiums on the trot now, so to end our year with a win is just fantastic," said a delighted Bell.

"It's been a phenomenal season for us [in the BRC] and we have progressed with every single rally. I'm very excited to continue to grow and improve and see what next season holds."

Second place went to Junior BRC champion Eamonn Kelly, who was making his R5 gravel debut in BRC1 machinery in a Polo R5. A trouble-free run was rounded off with the fastest overall stage time on the final test to secure a confidence-boosting result for the Irishman.

It was a rollercoaster of a rally for James Williams in his Hyundai i20 R5. Boost pipe issues on Friday night lost him almost two minutes, before fighting back on Saturday morning with three fastest BRC times on the bounce once the event turned to the gravel.

But an impact with a bale and more turbo issues hampered any further chargeback, and he was lucky to cross the finish ramp in Llandudno with a BRC podium in third.

The Junior BRC would also have a new winner thanks to Kelly stepping into R5 machinery, but it was a rally of attrition for the youngsters.

Early leader Fraser Anderson was forced to retire with engine issues on his Fiesta Rally4 before Saturday's opener and Ioan Lloyd failed to emerge from the second running of Brenig, with driveshaft failure on his Peugeot 208 Rally4. That left Johnnie Mulholland to land his maiden Junior BRC win in his Fiesta and secure the runner-up position in the standings.

MATT COTTON

JEP
Mulholland took the JBRC win as his rivals faltered

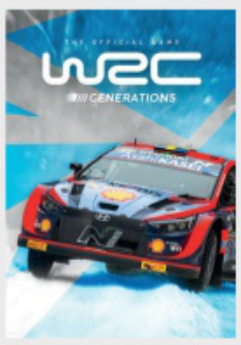
RALLY RESULTS

1 Oliver Solberg/Craig Drew (Volkswagen Polo R5); 2 Ruairi Bell/Max Freeman (Skoda Fabia R5) +1m51.8s; 3 Eamonn Kelly/Conor Mohan (Volkswagen Polo R5); 4 Hugh Hunter/Rob Fagg (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 5 James Williams/Dai Roberts (Hyundai i20 R5); 6 Johnnie Mulholland/Eoin Treacy (Ford Fiesta Rally4).
JBRC Mulholland/Treacy.

For full results visit:
britishrallychampionship.co.uk

FINISHING STRAIGHT

A fitting finale with a few bumps



VIDEO GAME
WRC GENERATIONS
RRP £39.99
(available on PC, PlayStation and Xbox)

WRC Generations — this year's official World Rally Championship game — marks the end for Parisien developers Kylotonn's involvement with the series, before the rights move elsewhere next season.

To bow out in style, not only does it introduce the new Rally1 hybrid-powered cars used in the real world, but the studio has also included several older rallies and classic cars from prior seasons and added a new league system.

There are 85 vehicles, 165 stages, cross-platform online leaderboards and livery creations plus more game modes than Ott Tanak has trophies. This is the most feature-rich rally game of all time.

To sit alongside the vast swathes of options, the visuals have been given a suitable uplift too, most noticeably on the all-new Umea Swedish routes. It must be noted, however, that older returning venues such as Corsica from 2019's *WRC 8* clearly still look and feel a little behind the pace.

You could have the highest volume of stage miles ever, but if the dynamics aren't up to standard, the game's longevity will be more akin to Sebastien Chardonnet's career, as opposed to Sebastien Loeb's.

As you traverse the game's diverse locales, while accessible with a gamepad, a steering wheel is clearly the best way of experiencing *Generations*. Using a high-end Fanatec device, the feedback is solid, relaying surface nuances back to the driver. Yet, those with entry-level equipment will lack consistent feedback at present when compared to last year's *WRC 10*.

There can be a tad more understeer upon corner entry this time around, so a quick little shimmy in the braking zone may be required to turn in effectively. On corner exits, there can be more oversteer, though, and balancing these characteristics requires adjustment.

A contributing factor is the hybrid system spinning up the tyres when leaving a tight corner, resulting in a spin for the unwary. The impact of the volts is selectable pre-stage across one of three set-ups (aka maps). Once acclimatised, you can find a pleasurable rhythm, where it's just you and your co-driver floating through a stage, artfully transitioning from one corner to the next, finely balancing the weight transfer.

The way your car impacts terra firma after a big jump could do with some refinement, sometimes feeling as if there's little or no damping as you unceremoniously crash land before awkwardly visiting the nearest ditch.

Still, it could be worse. It could be the engine sounds. We're convinced that the noise emanating from under the bonnet of the Skoda Fabia Rally2 is a recording of a food blender.

Another element that remains remarkably similar to prior WRC titles is the career mode, which data shows is where over 50% of played stages are completed. Car and team development skill trees remain, only this time they are mildly expanded to cover hybrid elements.

This is where the plethora of online options come in handy. The pioneering online co-driver mode returns, alongside the regular online competition. Clubs allow you to compete in customised network-connected events and championships.

The new league system aims to combine all the varied stages and cars through daily and weekly events. Your times will be turned into scores, and then you are placed within ranked leaderboards with those of a

New-generation WRC game heralds the Rally1 hybrid era

THE OFFICIAL GAME WRC GENERATIONS

Swedish stages highlight the visual uplift with this game

THE OFFICIAL GAME WRC GENERATIONS

similar experience level. During the pre-release review period, we found it provided competitive relief from career grinding – but the acid test will be if the community takes to it over time.

WRC Generations takes all the good bits from the past six editions, adds in the latest machines alongside a sprinkling of new gameplay features and calls it a day. The team has pulled off an engrossing rally video game with aplomb. While the fundamental pros and cons of the foundational platform were always going to remain present, its unswerving focus on continually refining the formula has resulted in a compelling experience for various skill levels.

THOMAS HARRISON-LORD

For daily racing game news, visit traxion.gg

AUTOSPORT F1 AND MOTORSPORT

autosport.com/podcast

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F1 Mexican Grand Prix review

Max Verstappen dominated to score a record-breaking 14th Formula 1 victory of the season at the Mexican Grand Prix, fending off a spirited challenge from Lewis Hamilton. Autosport F1 reporter Luke Smith and GP Racing editor Stuart Codling were both in Mexico City this weekend to review the Mexican GP, joined by podcast host Martyn Lee.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

MotoGP
Round 20/20
Valencia, Spain
6 November
TV **Live** BT Sport 2, Sun 1230
TV **Highlights** ITV4, Mon 2200

Super GT
Round 8/8
Motegi, Japan
5-6 November
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 0530, Sun 0345

NASCAR Cup
Round 36/36
Phoenix, USA
6 November
TV **Live** Premier Sports 2, Sun 1930

NASCAR Xfinity
Round 33/33
Phoenix, USA
5 November

NASCAR Truck Series
Round 23/23
Phoenix, USA
5 November
TV **Live** Premier Sports 2, Sat 0100

UK MOTORSPORT

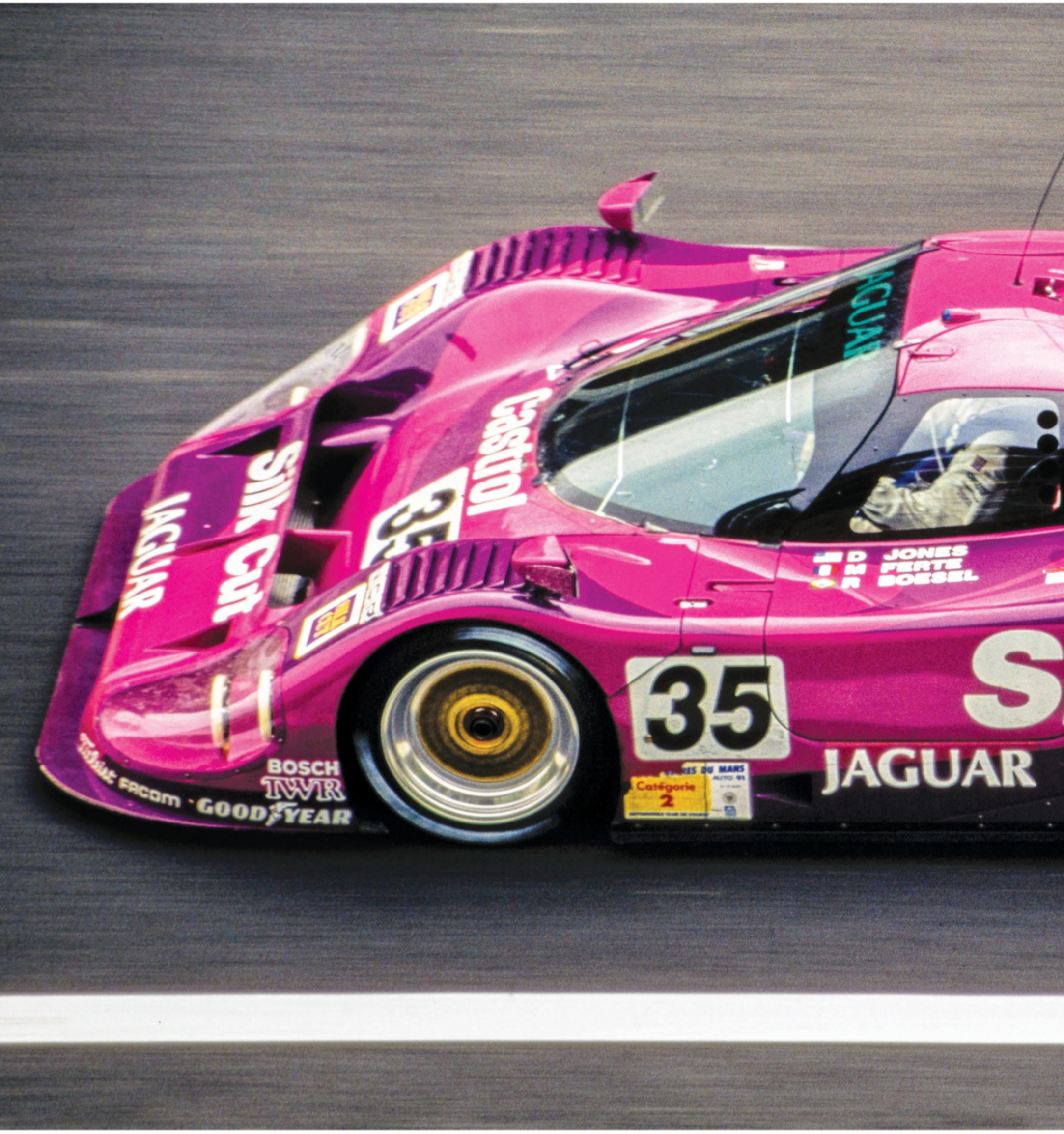
Silverstone HSCC
5-6 November
Walter Hayes Trophy, HSCC Allcomers, Monoposto, Sports & Saloons

Brands Hatch BARC
5-6 November
British Trucks, Legends, Mini Challenge Trophy, Mini Se7en, Pickup
Livestream via barc.net

British Rallycross
Round 7/7
Lydden Hill, England
5-6 November

Bagnaia or Quartararo? MotoGP title will be decided this Sunday

GOLDANDGOOSE



FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Jaguar XJR-12 shared by Davy Jones, Raul Boesel and Michel Ferte is resplendent in its cigarette-brand livery en route to runner-up spot in the 1991 Le Mans 24 Hours, topping a 2-3-4 finish for TWR. While the Jaguars were at a disadvantage on pace – "The car's run really nice," said Jones after a stint, "but fuel's tight and it's definitely the most difficult year we've had to set a pace to the fuel" – reliability was key as first Peugeot's then Mercedes' efforts fell apart. The Big Cats certainly couldn't catch the victorious rotary-engined Mazda 787B of Volker Weidler, Johnny Herbert and Bertrand Gachot.

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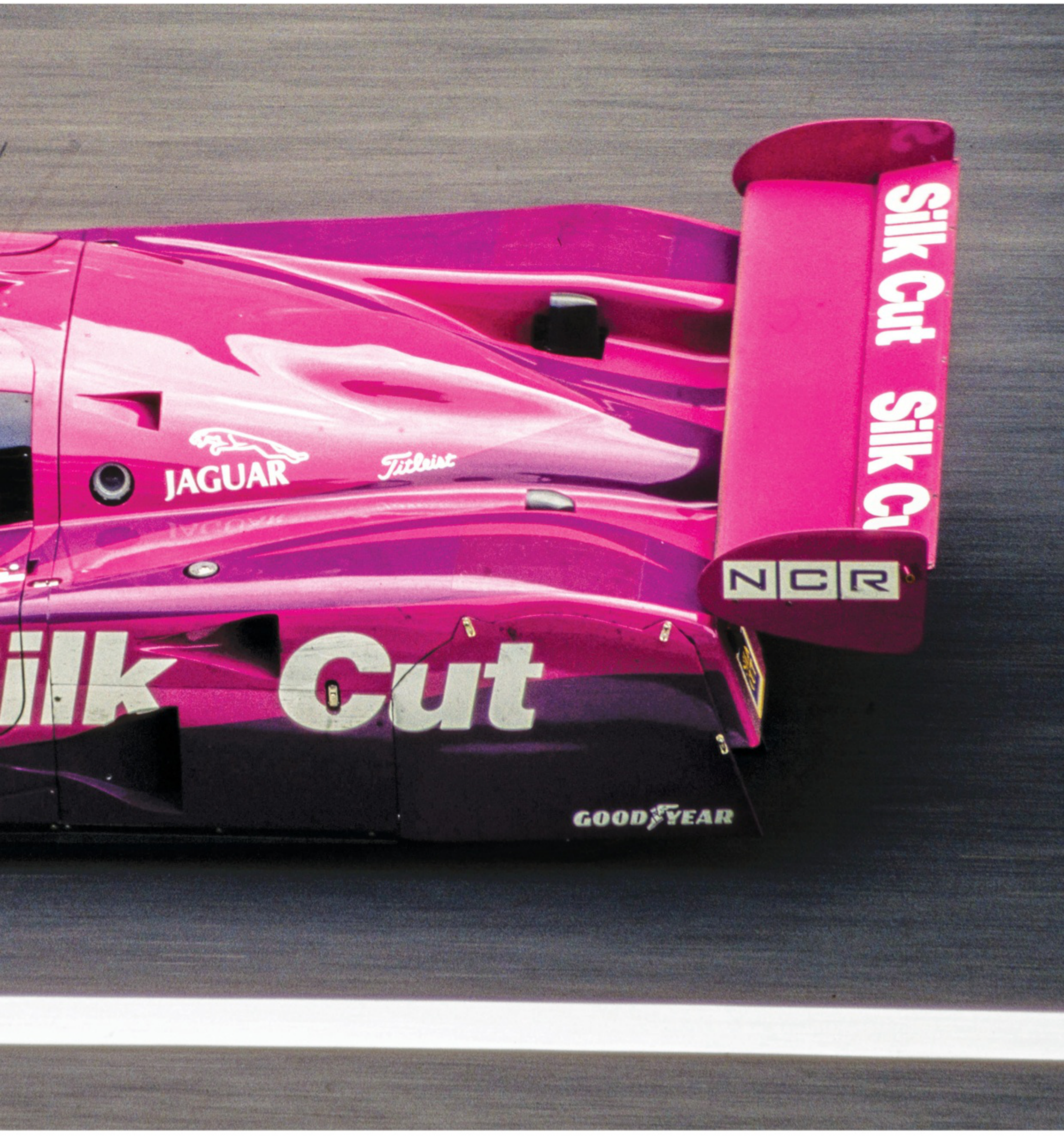

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ANDREW JORDAN

MY FAVOURITE... TEAM-MATE

Colin Turkington

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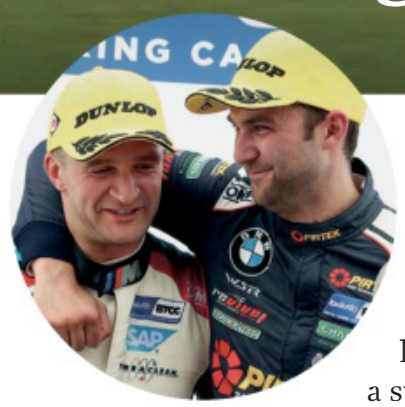

INSET: JEP

"Turks has got to be up there. If you want to win the British Touring Car Championship, you have to beat Colin in that BMW."

Andrew Jordan fought West Surrey Racing stablemate Colin Turkington throughout the 2019 BTCC and fell just two points short of a second crown, so it's perhaps no surprise that he picks the Northern Irishman as his top team-mate. Jordan took six wins to Turkington's five but a pointless Donington Park event following a race-one crash and his colleague's consistency made the difference.

"I felt I had the measure of him in 2019, but he always made you dig deep and his preparation was always very good," adds 2013 title winner Jordan. "I drive a lot more on feel, he's more analytical."

The title fight got tense towards the end of the campaign, but Jordan admits that was more about him trying to unsettle his rival than anything else: "He was pretty chill. It got a bit frosty at the end but that was circumstances and I was probably stoking the fire a bit to try and make it more awkward, to find an edge."

Jordan had got used to being the obvious team leader at Eurotech before a switch to the Triple Eight MG6 alongside Jack Goff in 2015. "That was the first time I thought, 'There are people who are quicker than me on some days', which is naive and you have to accept that," adds the 26-time BTCC winner. Jordan beat Goff in the points, though it was Goff who took the ageing car's only win of the campaign. Nevertheless, that season and the year at Motorbase alongside Mat Jackson, who finished ahead in the 2016 standings, helped prepare Jordan for taking on the now four-time BTCC champion at WSR.

Turkington finished ahead in both 2017 and 2018 with the 125i M Sport before both got their hands on the new 330i M Sport. "I think 2019 was my best year since my title and I felt I should have won it but I didn't," concludes Jordan. "Over the season Colin is the guy you have to beat. He's clever."

KEVIN TURNER

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

BINGHAM

The real Hamilton opens up

LEWIS ON 2021, THE W13... AND HIS F1 FUTURE

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